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MEMOIRE;

OR, DETAILED STATEMENT OF THE

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

OF THE

IRISH UNION:

DELIVERED TO THE IRISH GOVERNMENT,

By Messrs. Emmett, O'Connor, and M'Nevin;

TOGETHER WITH THE

EXAMINATIONS

OF THESE GENTLEMEN

BEFORE THE SECRET COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSES OF LORDS AND COMMONS,

IN THE SUMMER OF 1798.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

To the Public.

THE following Sheets, which contain a full and ſatisfactory Account of the Origin and Progreſs of the Iriſh Union, were received long ſince by the Editor from one of the State Priſoners. The publication has been delayed, in order that certain perſons, implicated in the Rebellion, might not provoke the anger of the Iriſh Miniſter, during their confinement. They are now preſented to the Public, not with a view to irritate, but to explain circumſtances, and detail facts, which, it is probable, a great part of the Iriſh nation are perfect ſtrangers to.

MEMOIR.

THE diſunion that had long exiſted between the Catholics and Proteſtants of Ireland, particularly thoſe of the Preſbyterian religion, was found by experience to be ſo great an obſtacle to the obtaining a Reform in Parliament, on any thing of juſt and popular principles, that ſome Perſons, equally friendly to that meaſure, and to Religious Toleration, conceived the idea of uniting both Sects, in purſuit of the ſame object—a Repeal of the Penal Laws, and a Reform, including in itſelf an extenſion of the Right of Suffrage to the Catholic.

From this originated the Societies of United Iriſhmen, in the end of the year 1791; even then it was clearly perceived that the chief ſupport of the Borough Intereſt in Ireland was the weight of Engliſh Influence; but as yet that obvious remark had not led the minds of the Reformers towards a Separation from England. Some individuals, perhaps, had convinced themſelves that benefit would reſult to this coun-

try from ſuch a meaſure; but during the whole exiſtence of the Society of United Iriſhmen of Dublin, we may ſafely aver, to the beſt of our knowledge and recollections, that no ſuch object was ever agitated by its Members, either in public debate, or private converſation, nor until the Society had laſted a conſiderable time, were any traces of Republicaniſm to be met with there: its views were purely and in good faith what the Teſt of the Society avows. Thoſe, however, were ſufficient to excite the moſt lively uneaſineſs in the friends of Proteſtant Aſcendancy and Unequal Repreſentation; inſomuch that the difficulty of their attainments, notwithſtanding the beginning union of ſects, became manifeſt. But with the difficulty, the neceſſity of the meaſure was ſtill more obvious; and the diſpoſition of the People, to run greater riſques, for what they conceived both difficult and neceſſary to be had, was encreaſed. This will ſufficiently account for the violent expreſſions and extraordinary propoſals that are attributed to that ſociety.—One of the latter was, that of endeavouring at ſome future, but undetermined time, to procure the meeting of a Convention, which ſhould take into conſideration the beſt mode of effecting a Reform in Parliament, as had been done in the year 1784. It was thought the weight and power of ſuch a body, backed as it was hoped it would, with the ſupport of Catholic and Proteſtant, and the encreaſed ſpirit towards Liberty which aroſe from the French Revolution, would procure a more favourable iſſue to the efforts of that Convention than had attended thoſe of the former; but the object as yet went no farther than a Reform in Parliament, only on more broad and liberal principles.

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The diſcuſſion, however, of political queſtions, both foreign and domeſtic, and the enacting of ſeveral unpopular laws, had advanced the minds of many people, even before they were aware of it, towards Republicaniſm and Revolution: they began to reaſon on the ſubject, and to think a Republican Form of Government was preferable to our own; but they ſtill conſidered it as impoſſible to be obtained, in conſequence of the Engliſh power and connexion. This, together with its being conſtantly perceived that the weight of Engliſh, was thrown into the ſcale of Borough Intereſt, gradually rendered the connexion itſelf an object of diſcuſſion; and its advantages ſomewhat problematical. While the minds of men were taking this turn, the Society of United Iriſhmen of Dublin, was in the year 1794 forcibly diſſolved, but the principles by which it was actuated were as ſtrong as ever; as hypocriſy was not one of the vices of that Society, it brought its deſtruction on itſelf by the openneſs of its diſcuſſion, and publicity of its proceedings. Its fate was a warning to that of Belfaſt, and ſuggeſted the idea of forming Societies, with the ſame object, but whoſe ſecrecy ſhould be their protection. The firſt of theſe Societies was, as we beſt recollect, in the year 1795. In order to ſecure co-operation and uniformity of action, they organized a ſyſtem of Committees, Baronial, County, and Provincial, and even National; but it was long before the ſkeleton of this organization was filled up. While the formation of theſe Societies was in agitation, the Friends of Liberty were gradually, but with a timid ſtep, advancing towards Republicaniſm; they began to be convinced, that it would be as eaſy to obtain a Revolution as a Reform, ſo

obſtinately was the latter reſiſted; and as the conviction impreſſed itſelf on their minds, they were inclined not to give up the ſtruggle, but to extend their views; it was for this reaſon that in their Teſt the words are "an equal repreſentation of all the people of Ireland," without inſerting the word Parliament. This Teſt embraced both the Republican and the Reformer, and left to future circumſtances to decide to which point the common ſtrength ſhould be directed; but ſtill the whole body, we are convinced, would rejoice to ſtop ſhort at Reform. Another conſideration, however, led the minds of reflecting United Iriſhmen to look towards a Republic and Separation from England; this was the war with France: they clearly perceived that their ſtrength was not likely to become ſpeedily equal to wreſting from the Engliſh and the Borough Intereſt in Ireland even a Reform; foreign aſſiſtance would, therefore, perhaps become neceſſary; but foreign aſſiſtance could only be hoped for in proportion as the object to which it would be applied was important to the party giving it. A Reform in the Iriſh Parliament was no object to the French—a Separation of Ireland from England was a mighty one indeed.—Thus they reaſoned: ſhall we, between two objects, confine ourſelves to the leaſt valuable, even though it is equally difficult to be obtained, if we conſider the relation of Ireland with the reſt of Europe.

Whatever progreſs the United Syſtem had made among the Catholics throughout the kingdom, until after the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, notwithſtanding many reſolutions which had appeared from them, manifeſting a growing

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ſpirit, they were conſidered as entertaining an habitual ſpirit for Monarchy, but alſo as being leſs attached than the Preſbyterians to Political Liberty. There were, however, certain men among them who rejoiced at the rejection of their claims, becauſe it gave them an opportunity of pointing out that the adverſaries of Reform were their adverſaries; and that theſe two objects could never be ſeparated with any chance of ſucceſs to either. They uſed the recall of that Nobleman, and the rejection of his meaſures, to cement together in political union the Catholic and Preſbyterian maſſes.

The modern Societies, for their protection againſt informers and proſecution, had introduced into their Teſt a clauſe of ſecrecy. They did more—they changed the engagement of their predeceſſors into an Oath; and mutual confidence encreaſed, when religion was called in aid of mutual ſecurity.

While they were almoſt entirely confined to the North, but encreaſing rapidly there, the Inſurrection Bill was paſſed in the beginning of the year 1796, augmenting the penalties upon adminiſtering unlawful oaths, or ſolemn obligations, even to death: but death had ceaſed to alarm men who began to think it was to be encountered in their country's cauſe. The ſtatute remained an abſolute dead letter, and the numbers of the body augmented beyond belief.

To the ARMAGH PERSECUTION is the Union of Iriſhmen moſt exceedingly indebted. The perſons and properties of

the wretched Catholics of that county were expoſed to the mercileſs attacks of an ORANGE FACTION, which was certainly in many inſtances uncontrouled by the Juſtices of Peace, and claimed to be in all ſupported by Government. When theſe men found that illegal acts of Magiſtrates were indemnified by occaſional ſtatutes, and the Courts of Juſtice ſhut againſt them, by Parliamentary barriers, they began to think they had no refuge but in joining the Union. Their diſpoſitions ſo to do, were much encreaſed by finding the Preſbyterians of Belfaſt eſpecially ſtep forward to eſpouſe their cauſe, and ſuccour their diſtreſs. We will here remark, once for all, what we moſt ſolemnly aver, that wherever the Orange Syſtem was introduced, particularly in Catholic counties, it was uniformly obſerved, that the numbers of United Iriſhmen encreaſed moſt aſtoniſhingly. The alarm which an Orange Lodge excited among the Catholics made them look for refuge by joining together in the United Syſtem; and as their number was always greater than that of bigoted Proteſtants, our harveſt was ten-fold. At the ſame time that we mention this circumſtance we muſt confeſs, and muſt deeply regret, that it excited a mutual acrimony and vindictive ſpirit, which was peculiarly oppoſite to the intereſt, and abhorrent to the feelings of the United Iriſhmen, and has ately manifeſted itſelf, we hear, into outrages of ſo much horror.

Defenderiſm has been ſuppoſed to be the origin of the modern Societies of United Iriſhmen: this is undoubtedly either a miſtake or a miſrepreſentation; we ſolemnly declare,

that

that there was no connexion between them and the United Iriſh, as far as we know, except what follows :

After the Defenders had ſpread into different counties, they manifeſted a rooted but unenlightened averſion, among other things, to the ſame grievances, that were complained of by the Union. They were compoſed almoſt entirely of Catholics, and thoſe of the loweſt order, who, through a falſe confidence, were riſking themſelves, and the attainment of redreſs by premature and unſyſtematic inſurrection. In the North they were alſo engaged in an acrimonious and bloody ſtruggle with an oppoſite faction, called Peep-of-day-boys. The advantage of reconciling theſe two miſguided parties, of joining them in the Union, and ſo turning them from any views they might have excluſively religious, and of reſtraining them from employing a mutually deſtructive exertion of force, moſt powerfully ſtruck the minds of ſeveral United Iriſhmen. For that purpoſe, many of them in the Northern counties went among both, but particularly the Defenders, joined with them, ſhewed them the ſuperiority of the Union Syſtem, and gradually, while Government was endeavouring to quell them by force, melted them down into the United Iriſh body. This rendered their conduct infinitely more orderly, and leſs ſuſpicious to Government.

It has been alledged againſt the United Iriſhmen, that they eſtabliſhed a ſyſtem of aſſaſſination. Nothing that has ever been imputed to them, that we feel more pleaſure in being able to diſavow. In ſuch immenſe numbers as were

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to be found in that body, altho' uniformity of ſyſtem may have given a wonderful uniformity of action, yet it is unfair and unjuſt to charge the whole body with the vices of a few of its members: individual grievances produced individual reſentments, and the meeting of many ſufferers in the ſame way, frequently cauſed them to concur in the ſame reſolutions. It appears, indeed, by ſome trials, that a Baronial once took that ſubject into conſideration, but it was manifeſt, it was taken up by them as individuals, whoſe principles, as it afterwards appeared, were not repugnant to the act. A Committee of Aſſaſſination has been much talked of —we have heard perſons mentioned as members of it, whom we know, from the moſt private and confidential converſations, to be utterly abhorrent from that crime. We ſolemnly declare, we believe that ſuch a Committee never exiſted.—We moſt poſitively aver, it never was with the cognizance of a part of the Union. We alſo declare, that in no communication from thoſe who were placed at the head of the United Iriſhmen, to the reſt of that body, and in no official paper, was aſſaſſination ever inculcated, but frequently and fervently reprobated. It was conſidered by them with horror, on account of its criminality, and with perſonal dread, becauſe it would render ferocious the minds of men, in whoſe hands their lives were placed, moſt particularly placed; inaſmuch as between them and the reſt of that body were they out of the protection of the law. In proof of this aſſertion, we would beg leave to refer to a ſketch of a publication, which we believe was ſeized among the papers of one of us, at the time of his arreſt, and which it was intended ſhould appear, if the paper to which it alluded had not been diſcontinued.—

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One other conſideration, which we entreat may not offend, will, we hope, be deciſive. If ſuch Committee had exiſted, and if the men at the head of the United Iriſhmen had thought aſſaſſination a juſtifiable mode of attaining their ends, and had been capable of encouraging ſuch atrocity, poſſeſſed as they were of wide-ſpread means of acting, and powerful controul over men, who, it is now manifeſt, held the loſs of life in utter contempt, the poignard would have been directed, not againſt ſuch petty objects as an obnoxious county Magiſtrate, or an informer.

We were none of us members of the United Syſtem until September or October, in the year 1796; at that time it muſt be confeſſed, the reaſons already alledged, and the initiations of the preceding ſummer in the North, had diſpoſed us to a Separation and Republic, principally becauſe we were hopeleſs that a Reform would ever be yielded to any peaceable exertion of the people. We cannot be accurate as to the progreſs either of the numbers or organization of the United Iriſhmen; it having been an invariable rule, to burn all the returns, or other papers, after they ceaſed to be uſeful; we have no documents wherewith to refreſh our memories, but we apprehend the Report of the Secret Committee to be, in that caſe, ſufficiently accurate, except that the numbers were always much greater than appeared by thoſe reports; the documents on which they rely, only noticed thoſe who went regularly into ſocieties; but great numbers, perhaps at a rough gueſs, half as many were ſworn to the teſt, who were prevented by private motives and local circumſtances, from committing

committing themſelves in that way; we are, however, convinced, that the numbers of the whole body could not latterly be leſs than 500,000.

The returns from the different ſocieties, and committees upwards, ſpecified among other things, arms and ammunition; they were not originally included in them, nor were they introduced until after the paſſing the Inſurrection and Indemnity Acts, when the people began to be more than ever carried towards reſiſtance, and were extremely irritated by the indemnified violations of law in the North. The returns alſo ſtated, ſums of money having been collected; thoſe ſums were always very ſmall, and applied towards the ſupport of perſons impriſoned on charges connected with the Union, and in conducting of their defences; any other expences were defrayed by occaſional private ſubſcriptions.

The printed Conſtitution mentions a National Committee; none ſuch, ſtrictly ſpeaking, was ever formed, at firſt, becauſe to its appointment, two Provincials at leaſt were neceſſary; and before the organization in any other part of the kingdom could reach to a provincial, the immenſe numbers in Ulſter required a ſupreme head. Some perſons were then choſen by the Northern Provincial, with powers to aſſociate to themſelves ſuch others as they ſhould think fit. They were commonly called the Executive. When the organization began in Leinſter, and ſhortly after the French left Bantry Bay, ſome perſons reſident in this province were aſſociated to that body; things continued thus until many began to think, that elections ſhould take place purſuant to the Conſtitution. The

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fidelity of the people had by that time been ſo abundantly proved, that men did not heſitate to ſubmit themſelves to a guarded election by the Leinſter Provincial. National Delegates were therefore choſen by it, who acted for their own province, and occaſionally conſulted with the Executive of the North on ſubjects of general importance. The election of National Delegates firſt took place, as we beſt recollect, about the latter end of November or December, 1797.

The military organization had no exiſtence until towards the latter end of 1796, and was as near as could be engrafted on the civil: in order to avoid giving alarm, it continued to conceal itſelf as much as poſſible under the uſual denominations. The Secretary of a ſociety of twelve, was commonly the petty officer; the delegate of five ſocieties to a Lower Baronial, when the population required ſuch an intermediate ſtep, was uſually the Captain, and the Delegates from the Lower to the Upper Baronial, was uſually the Colonel. All officers to Colonels up, were indiſpenſibly elected by thoſe they were to command, but at that point the interference of the Societies ceaſed, and every higher commiſſion was in the appointment of the Executive; only as ſoon as ſufficient numbers of regiments were organized in any county, the Colonels were directed to tranſmit to the Executive the names of three perſons, fit, in their opinion, to act as Adjutants General for that county; of thoſe, the Executive choſe one; and through this organ all military communications were made to the ſeveral counties; in conſequence of ſuch arrangements not more than one of the Executive need ever be committed with any county, and that only to a perſon of his own choice from among the

the three. It ſo happened, that the ſame member was entitled to hold communications with ſeveral Adjutants General, which ſtill further diminiſhed the riſk to the Executive: we refer to the amended printed Conſtitution, where the Military Conſtitution, without being named, is more correctly ſet forth, than we can give from memory. As to the manner in which theſe men were to be provided with arms and ammunition, every man who could afford it was directed to provide himſelf with a muſket, bayonet, and as much ammunition as he could; every other man with a pike, and if he was able a caſe of piſtols; but this, we apprehend, was not ſtrictly adhered to. We have heard it ſaid, that Treaſurers were appointed for raiſing money to purchaſe arms, but no ſuch appointment was ever made, at leaſt by the Executive. Perhaps ſome private Societies might have adopted ſuch a meaſure.

In many inſtances the lower orders went about to private houſes to ſearch for arms; this the Executive conſtantly endeavoured to prevent; becauſe they were unwilling to raiſe alarm in their adverſaries, or let the members of their body acquire habits of plunder, and be confounded with robbers. They endeavoured to diſſuade them from theſe acts, by repreſenting to the people, that the arms would always be kept in better condition by the gentlemen than by them, and could be eaſily ſeized whenever neceſſary. In other reſpects our ſtores were in the arſenal in the Caſtle, and the military depots throughout the country; our ſupplies were in the Treaſury.

A Military

A Military Committee was appointed by the Executive in February, 1798, for the principal purpoſe of preparing plans of operations, either in caſe of a premature inſurrection, if we ſhould be unfortunately and unwillingly forced into one, or of the invaſion from France. As a Committee it did nothing, but ſome of its members took up the conſideration of the latter ſubject, and framed inſtructions how to act in caſe of a landing of a foreign force; theſe were ſent by the Executive to ſuch Adjutants General as had received their appointments; they generally went to uſe every effort in favour of the French.

Attempts were made with as much zeal as the neceſſary caution would permit, to introduce the ſyſtem among the military, the militia eſpecially; but the reports of the agents were moſtly confuſed and unſatisfactory, ſo that the ſucceſs of the meaſure could never be aſcertained with any tolerable accuracy.

We have read in ſome evidence lately given, that a perſon was appointed Colonel by a Commiſſion from a General in the rebel army; we muſt beg leave to doubt, if not deny, the truth of that aſſertion: no General was ever choſen for Leinſter, and Colonels were always appointed by their Captains; they derived their authority from this appointment, not from any Commiſſion of a General.

If Iriſh officers in foreign ſervice had joined in our cauſe, they would have been gladly received, and rapidly promoted. Indeed an attempt to procure that was actually ſet on foot;

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we counted on their attachment to their native ſoil, and hatred to England, as a ſubſtitute for Republicaniſm, and when they ſhould be convinced, that ſuch a form of Government was the beſt ſecurity for the permanent ſeparation of the two countries, we were ſure of their fidelity. It has ſo happened, however, from the delay of peace on the Continent, or becauſe our agent was over cautious in conducting the negociation, leſt it ſhould become known to the reſpective Potentates, and communicated to the Britiſh Court, that nothing in conſequence of it has hitherto been effected.

We can aver, that no general plan of inſurrection exiſted before the 12th of March, 1798; but ſome individuals had perhaps formed local ones, adapted to the taking Dublin, and a few other places. When the North was on the point of riſing, after the celebrated Proclamation of General Lake, a plan of operations had been ſuggeſted for that occaſion, which was deſtroyed as ſoon as the people were diſſuaded from the enterpriſe, of which we cannot now ſpeak with any degree of preciſion.

Several recommendations were occaſionally handed down from the Executive through the Committees, the dates or contents of which we cannot undertake to detail, unleſs they ſhould be called to our recollection. The moſt remarkable as they now occur to us, was a recommendation to abſtain from ſpiritous and exciſeable articles, not ſo much to deſtroy the reſources of Government, as for the purpoſe of preſerving ſobriety, which was ſo neceſſary to ſecreſy, and morality, which was ſo neceſſary to good order. It may be right to remark,

remark, that the recommendation was, however, painful to the people, and contrary to their former habits, moſt aſtoniſhingly complied with. The Executive alſo directed to diſcourage the circulation of bank notes, and publiſhed a hand bill, cautioning againſt the purchaſing of quit rents, purſuant to a ſcheme then in agitation, declaring, that as ſuch a ſale was an anticipation of the future reſources of the country, it ſhould not be allowed to ſtand good in the event of a revolution. The reaſons for theſe publications are obvious; we muſt here remark, that many things were introduced by the Executive to ſome one of its members. It having been an invariable rule, that no more than one of them ſhould, on any occaſion, be committed with perſons not of its body; for this reaſon many things here ſtated are ſet forth on the credit of one individual, but believed by the remainder.

About the middle of 1796, a meeting of the Executive took place, more important in its diſcuſſions and its conſequences, than any that had preceded it; as ſuch we have thought ourſelves bound to give an account of it with the moſt perfect frankneſs, and more than ordinary preciſion. This meeting took place in conſequence of a letter from one of the Society, who had emigrated on account of political opinions: it mentioned, that the ſtate of the country had been repreſented to the Government of France, in ſo favourable a point of view, as to induce them to reſolve upon invading Ireland, for the purpoſe of enabling it to ſeparate itſelf from Great Britain. On this ſolemn and important occaſion, a ſerious review was taken of the ſtate of the Iriſh

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nation at that period: it was obſerved, that a deſperate ferment exiſted in the public mind; a reſolution in favour of a Parliamentary Reform had indeed been paſſed early in 1793 by the Houſe of Commons, but after it had been fruſtrated by ſeveral ſucceſſive adjournments, all hope of its attainment was vaniſhed, and its friends every where proſcribed; the volunteers were put down; all power of meeting by delegation for any political purpoſe, the mode in which it was moſt uſual and expedient to co-operate on any ſubject of importance, was taken away at the ſame time. The provocations of the year 1794, the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, and the reaſſumption of coercive meaſures, that followed it, were ſtrongly dwelt on: the county of Armagh had been long deſolated by two contending factions, agreeing only in one thing, an opinion, that moſt of the active Magiſtrates in that county treated one party with the moſt foſtering kindneſs, and the other with the moſt rigorous perſecution. It was ſtated, that ſo marked a partiality exaſperated the ſufferers, and thoſe who ſympathized in their misfortunes. It was urged with indignation, that notwithſtanding the greatneſs of the military eſtabliſhment in Ireland, and its having been able to ſuppreſs the Defenders in various counties, it was not able, or was not employed to ſuppreſs theſe outrages in that county, which drove 7000 perſons from their native dwellings. The Magiſtrates, who took no ſteps againſt the Orangemen, were ſaid to have overleaped the boundaries of law to purſue and puniſh the Defenders. The Government ſeemed to take upon themſelves thoſe injuries by the Indemnity Act, and even honoured the violators; and by the Inſurrection Act, which enabled the ſame Magiſtrates, if they

choſe, under colour of law, to act anew the ſame abominations. Nothing, it was contended, could more juſtly excite the ſpirit of reſiſtance, and determine men to appeal to arms, than the Inſurrection Act; it puniſhed with death the adminiſtering of oaths, which in their opinion were calculated for the moſt virtuous and honourable purpoſes. The power of proclaiming counties, and quieting them by breaking open the cabins of the peaſants between ſunſet and ſunriſe, by ſeizing the inmates, and ſending them on board tenders, without the ordinary interpoſition of a Trial by Jury, had, it was alledged, irritated beyond endurance the minds of the reflecting, and the feelings of the unthinking inhabitants of that province. It was contended, that even according to the Conſtitution and example of 1688, when the protection of the Conſtituted Authorities was drawn from the ſubject, Allegiance, the reciprocal duty, ceaſed to bind; when the people were not redreſſed, they had a right to reſiſt, and were free to ſeek for allies wherever they were to be found. The Engliſh revolutioniſts of 1688 called in the aid of a foreign Republic to overthrow their oppreſſors. There had ſprung up in our own time a much more mighty Republic, which, by its offers of aſſiſtance to break the chains of ſlavery, had drawn on itſelf a war with the enemies of our freedom, and now particularly tendered us its aid. Theſe arguments prevailed, and it was reſolved to employ the proferred aſſiſtance for the purpoſe of ſeparation. We were aware it was ſuſpected that negociations between the United Iriſhmen and the French, were carried on at an earlier period than that now alluded to, but we ſolemnly declare ſuch ſuſpicion was ill founded. In conſequence of this determination of the Exe-

cutive, an Agent was diſpatched to the French Directory, who acquainted them with it, ſtated the diſpoſitions of the people, and the meaſures which cauſed them, he received freſh aſſurances that the ſuccours ſhould be ſent, as ſoon as the armament could be got ready.

About October, 1796, a Meſſenger from the Republic arrived, who, after authenticating himſelf, ſaid he came to be informed of the ſtate of the country, and to tell the Leaders of the United Iriſhmen of the intention of the French to invade it ſpeedily with 15,000 men, and a great quantity of arms and ammunition ; but neither mentioned the preciſe time, nor the place, doubting, we ſuppoſe, our caution, or our ſecrecy. Shortly after his departure, a letter arrived from a quarter, which there was reaſon to look on as confidential, ſtating, that they would invade England in the Spring, and poſitively Ireland. The reaſon of this contradiction has never been explained ; but the conſequences of it, and the Meſſenger not having ſpecified the place of landing, was, that when the armament arrived in December, 1796, at Bantry Bay, they came at a time, and in a port we had not foreknown.

After the intended deſcent had failed, it occurred to ſome Members of the Aſſociation, and their friends in the city, and to ſome of the moſt conſiderate of the United Iriſhmen, that one more attempt ſhould be made in favour of Parliamentary Reform. They hoped that the terrible warning which had been given by the facility of reaching our coaſts, and if the armament had landed, the poſſibility at leaſt of its

ſucceeding,

ſucceeding, would have ſhewn the Borough Proprietors of the neceſſity of conceding to the popular wiſh. The ſtorm had diſperſed a cloud, big with danger, but it might again collect, and the thunder of republic and revolution again roll, and perhaps burſt over their heads. This was then judged the beſt moment to perſuade them in the midſt of their fears, to a meaſure ſtrictly counter-revolutionary.

We think it but right to ſtate, that no greater connexion ever ſubſiſted between any of the Members of the Oppoſition and the United Iriſhmen, except in this inſtance, and for the accompliſhment of this purpoſe. In conſequence of theſe joint efforts, a meeting was held at the Exchange, which declared in favour of Reform, and a propoſal of that nature was ſubmitted to Parliament. If in the courſe of that effort for Reform it had not become evident, that ſucceſs was hopeleſs, it was the wiſh of many among us, and we believe the Executive would have gladly embraced the occaſion of declining to hold any further intercourſe with France, except ſending a Meſſenger there to tell them that the difference between the Government and the People had been adjuſted, and that they would have no buſineſs a ſecond time to attempt a landing. In fact, no attempt or advance was made to renew the negociation till April, 1797, when an Agent was ſent. In the May following, the well-known proclamation of General Lake appeared. This very much encreaſed the ferment of the public mind, and the wiſh for the return of the French, that they might get rid of the ſeverities of martial law. It did more, it goaded many

people of the North to preſs the Executive to an inſurrection, independent of foreign aid.

About this time a letter arrived, which aſſured us the French would come again, and requeſted that a perſon ſhould be ſent over to make previous arrangements. The eagerneſs of thoſe in the North who were urgent for inſurrection, was checked by making known this communication to them, and entreating for delay ; it was reſiſted likewiſe by ſome of the moſt ſober and reflecting among themſelves, who were of opinion they were not yet ſufficiently prepared for the attempt ; thoſe conſiderations prevailed, particularly as in order to enforce them, an advantage was taken of the wiſh expreſſed by their enemies, that the people might riſe.

The impatience, however, which was manifeſted on this occaſion, and the knowledge that it was only controuled by the expectation of ſpeedy and foreign aſſiſtance, determined the Executive to ſend an Agent ſpeedily to France, in anſwer to the letter. This perſon departed in the latter end of June 1797. By both theſe Agents, rather a ſmall number of men, with a great quantity of arms, ammunition, artillery, and officers were required ; a ſmall force only was aſked for, becauſe the Executive, faithful to the principle of Iriſh Independence, wiſhed for what they deemed juſt ſufficient to liberate their country, but incompetent to ſubdue it.— This moſt determined reſolution, and that of the whole body, being collected as far as its opinion could be taken, always has been in no event to let Ireland come under the dominion

dominion of France, but it was offered to pay the expences of the expedition. The number required was 10,000 men at the moſt, and at the leaſt 5000. The Executive inclined to the larger number; but even with the ſmaller, the general opinion among them was, there could be no doubt of ſucceſs. As to the quantity of arms, by the firſt Meſſenger 40,000 ſtand were ſpecified, but by the ſecond, as much more as could be ſent; the difference aroſe from the diſarming that had gone on in the North, and the encreaſing numbers who were ready to uſe them. The Executive alſo inſtructed its Agents to negociate for a loan of money, if it could be had in France; if not, to negociate with Spain—the ſum was half a million. Our ſecond Agent, on his arrival at Hamburgh, wrote a memorial, containing thoſe and other details, a copy of which, ſome way or other, we perceive the Government has obtained, and therefore refer to it. He then proceeded to Paris, to treat further on the buſineſs, where he preſented a ſecond memorial; the object of this was to urge motives ariſing out of the ſtate of affairs, which would induce the Directory not to poſtpone the invaſion. We cannot preciſely ſtate the whole of its contents, as, according to the conſtant practice already mentioned, no copy of it has been preſerved; but it was to demonſtrate a diſpoſition that then exiſted in the Iriſh mind, was in no future contingency to be expected, on any ſubſequent rupture between Great Britain and the French Republic. His Majeſty's Miniſters muſt ſee that Ireland would infallibly become the ſeat of war, if they did not previouſly remove their grievances, the exiſtence of which would naturally invite, and prove

a powerful auxiliary to the enemy. Such a rupture, it was obſerved, muſt be in the contemplation of the Britiſh Cabinet, as ſeveral of its moſt leading members declared that they conſidered the exiſtence of the Britiſh Monarchy incompatible with that of the Republic. Conciliation, then, according to every rule of policy and common ſenſe, ſhould be ultimately adopted; and though it ſhould fall ſhort of the wiſhes of the people, it was aſſerted, if once poſſeſſed of a reaſonable ſhare of liberty, they would not be brought to run the chance of a revolution in order to obtain a more perfect ſyſtem of freedom.

Our ſecond Agent, while at Paris, and pending the negociation at Liſle, was told by ſome of the perſons in power in France, that if certain terms, not ſpecified to him, were offered by the Engliſh, peace would certainly be made.—However, after the negociation was broken off, he received poſitive aſſurances that the Iriſh never ſhould be abandoned, until a ſeparation was effected, and that they ſhould be left entirely at their own option to chooſe their own form of government.

About this time a perſon came over, informing us that a conſiderable army was ready, and embarked at the Texel, deſtined for Ireland, and only waiting for a wind. The troops afterwards diſembarked, but we are ignorant of the reaſon why they never ſailed, except perhaps that the wind continued ſo long adverſe, that the proviſions were exhauſted —and that in the mean time diſturbances broke out in the

French

French Government. It may be proper to remark, that in none of the communications or negociations with France, did the Government of that country ever intimate the place they would land, or, except in the firſt, the force they would bring.

Sometime in the beginning of the year a letter was received from France, ſtating, the ſuccours might be expected in April. Why the promiſe was not fulfilled, we have never learned. We know nothing of further communications from any foreign ſtate, nor of the future plan of operations of the French; but we are convinced they will not abandon the plan of ſeparating this country from England, ſo long as the diſcontents of the people would induce them to ſupport an invaſion.

Let us, then, while Ireland is yet our country, be indulged in a few remarks, which we deem extremely important to its future proſperity; now that we have given theſe full and faithful details of the paſt, we cannot be ſuſpected of any but pure diſintereſted motives in what we are about to ſay, ere we leave it for ever. The parts we have acted have enabled us to gain the moſt intimate knowledge of the diſpoſitions and hearts of our countrymen. From that knowledge we ſpeak, when we declare our deepeſt conviction that the Penal Laws, which have followed in ſuch doleful and rapid ſucceſſion—the Houſe Burnings—Arbitrary Impriſonments—and Free Quarters—and above all, the Tortures to extort confeſſions—neither have had, or can have, any

any other effect but exciting the moſt lively rancour in the hearts of almoſt all the people of Ireland, againſt thoſe of their countrymen who have had recourſe to ſuch meaſures for maintaining their power, and againſt the connexion with Great Britain, whoſe men, and whoſe aid have been poured in to aſſiſt them.

The matchleſs fidelity which has marked the Union—the unexampled firmneſs and contempt of death, diſplayed by ſo many thouſands at the halbert, in the field, in the gaol, and at the gibbet, exempt us from claiming any belief on on our perſonal credit. If the hearts of the people be not attached by ſome future meaſures, this nation will be again, and more violently diſturbed, on the coming of a foreign force. If a Reform be adopted, founded upon the abolition of Corporations and Boroughs, as conſtituent bodies, and the equal diviſion of the repreſentatives among thoſe who may be entitled to the elective ſuffrage, the beſt poſſible ſtep will be taken for preſerving the Monarchical Conſtitution, and Britiſh Connexion. For the ſucceſs of this meaſure we would not now anſwer—but of this we are ſure, you muſt either extirpate or reform.

The hurry and ſtill agitated minds with which we write, will, we hope, not only apologize for any inaccuracy of ſtile, but likewiſe ſerve the much more important purpoſe, of excuſing any expreſſions that may not be deemed ſufficiently circumſpect. Much as we wiſh to ſtop the effuſion of blood,

blood, and the preſent ſcene of uſeleſs horrors, we have not affected a change of principles, which would only bring on us the imputation of hypocriſy, when it is our moſt anxious wiſh to evince perfect ſincerity and good faith. We however entreat Government to be aſſured, that, while it is ſo much our intereſt to conciliate, it is far from our intention to offend.

ARTHUR O'CONNOR.

THOMAS ADDIS EMMETT.

WM. JAMES M'NEVIN.

EXAMINATION.

Subſtance of THOMAS ADDIS EMMETT*'s Examination before the Secret Committee of the Houſe of Lords, on Friday, Auguſt* 10, 1798.

COMMITTEE. WERE you an United Iriſhman?

EMMETT. My Lords, I AM one.

COM. Were you a Member of the Executive?

EMMETT. I was of the Executive from the month of January to the month of May, 1797, and afterwards from Dec. 1797, 'till I was arreſted.

[I was then aſked as to the Military Organization, which I detailed.—They then aſked, when the returns included fire arms and ammunition?]

EMMETT

EMMETT. After the Inſurrection and Indemnity Acts had been paſſed, when the people were led to think on reſiſtance, and after 4000 perſons had been driven from the county of Armagh by the Orangemen.

COM. Was not the name of Orangeman uſed to terrify the people into the United Syſtem?

EMMETT. I do no not know what groundleſs fears may have been propagated by ignorant people; but I am ſure no unfair advantage was taken by the Executive. The Orange principles were fairly diſcuſſed, as far as they were known, and we always found, that wherever it was attempted to eſtabliſh a lodge, the United Iriſh encreaſed very much.

LORD DILLON. Why, where was it endeavoured to introduce them except in the North, and the city of Dublin?

EMMETT. My Lord, I can't tell you all the places in which it was endeavoured, but I will name one, in the county of Roſcommon, where I am told it made many United Iriſhmen.

LORD DILLON. Well, that was but very lately, and I endeavoured to reſiſt it.

COM. When were the firſt communications with France?

EMMETT. The firſt I heard of were after the Inſurrection and Indemnity Acts had been carried; the firſt I knew of was after the French fleet had left Bantry Bay, and after it was manifeſt the effort for Reform would not ſucceed; and permit me to add on my oath, it was my intention to propoſe to, and from converſations I had with ſome of the Executive Directory, I am ſure it would have been carried there, that if there had been any reaſonable hope of Reform being adopted

adopted, to ſend one more meſſenger to France, and he ſhould have told them, the difference between the People and the Government was adjuſted, and not to attempt a ſecond invaſion. [They then took me into detail through the whole of the negociations and meſſages—ſtated that the demand on our part was from five to ten thouſand men, and 40,000 ſtands of arms, by the firſt agent; that the inſtructions to the ſecond agent differed by requeſting more arms in conſequence of the diſarming of the North, which had intervened, and that the French had promiſed we ſhould be at perfect liberty to chooſe our own form of government. It was expreſsly ſtipulated with them that they ſhould conduct themſelves ſo.]

LORD CHANCELLOR. As they did in Holland?

EMMETT. As Rochambeau did in America, my Lords.

They then entered on the ſubject of the Separation.

LORD CHANCELLOR. How is it poſſible, Mr. Emmett, juſt look on the map, and tell me how you can ſuppoſe that Ireland could exiſt independent of England or France?

EMMETT. My Lords, if I had any doubt on that ſubject, I ſhould have never attempted to effect a ſeparation, but I have given it as much conſideration as my faculties would permit, and I have not a ſhadow of doubt, that if Ireland was once independent, ſhe might defy the combined efforts of France and England.

Archbiſhop of CASHEL. My God! her trade would be deſtroyed!

EMMETT. Pardon me, my Lord, her trade would be infinitely encreaſed: 150 years ago, when Ireland contained not

not more than one million and an half of men, and America was nothiog, the connexion might be ſaid to be neceſſary to Ireland, but now that ſhe contains five millions, and America is the beſt market in the world, and Ireland the beſt ſituated country in Europe to trade with that market, ſhe has outgrown the connexion.

LORD CHANCELLOR. Yes, I remember talking to a Gentleman of your acquaintance, and I believe one of your body and way of thinking, who told me that Ireland had nothing to complain of from England; but that ſhe was ſtrong enough to ſet up for herſelf.

EMMETT. I beg, my Lords, that may not be conſidered as my opinion: I think Ireland has a great many things to complain of againſt England: I am ſure ſhe is ſtrong enough to ſet up for herſelf; and give me leave to tell you, my Lords, that if the Government of this country be not regulated ſo as that the controul may be wholly Iriſh, and that the commercial arrangements between the two countries be not put on the footing of perfect equality, the connexion cannot laſt.

LORD CHANCELLOR. What would you do for coals?

EMMETT. In every revolution, and in every war, the people muſt ſubmit to ſome privations; but I muſt obſerve to your Lordſhips, that there is a reciprocity between the buyer and ſeller, and that England would ſuffer as much as Ireland if we did not buy her coals. However, I will grant our fuel would become dearer for a time, but by paying a higher price we could have a full ſufficient abundance from our own coal mines, and from bogs, by means of our canals.

Archbiſhop of CASHEL. Why, twelve frigates would ſtop up all our ports.

EMMETT. My Lord, you muſt have taken a very imperfect ſurvey of the ports on the weſtern coaſts of this kingdom if you ſuppoſe that twelve frigates would block them up; and I muſt obſerve to you, that if Ireland was for three months ſeparated from England, the latter would ceaſe to be ſuch a formidable naval power.

LORD CHANCERROR. Well, I can conceive the Separation could laſt twelve hours.

EMMETT. I declare it to God, I think that if Ireland were ſeparated from England, ſhe would be the happieſt ſpot on the face of the globe.

[At which they all ſeemed aſtoniſhed.]

LORD CHANCELLOR. But how could you rely on France that ſhe would keep her promiſe of not interfering with your Government?

EMMETT. My reliance, my Lords, was more on Iriſh powers, than on French promiſes; for I was convinced, that though ſhe could not eaſily ſet up the ſtandard herſelf, yet, when it was once raiſed, a very powerful army would flock to it, which organized under its own officers would have no reaſon to dread 100,000 Frenchmen, and we only ſtipulated for a tenth part of that number.

Lord KILWARDEN. You ſeem averſe to inſurrection; I ſuppoſe it was becauſe you thought it impolitic?

EMMETT. Unqueſtionably: for if I imagined an inſurrection could have ſucceeded, without a great waſte of blood and time, I ſhould have preferred it to invaſion, as it would not have expoſed us to the chance of contributions being required by a foreign force; but as I did not think ſo, and as I

was

was certain an invaſion would ſucceed ſpeedily, and without much ſtruggle, I preferred it even at the hazard of that inconvenience, which we took every pains to prevent.

Lord Dillon. Mr. Emmett, you have ſtated the views of the Executive to be very liberal and very enlightened, and I believe yours were ſo; but let me aſk you, whether it was not intended to cut off (in the beginning of the conteſt) the leaders of the oppoſition party by a ſummary mode, ſuch as aſſaſſination: my reaſon for aſking you is, John Sheares's proclamation, the moſt terrible paper that ever appeared in any country: it ſays, that "many of your tyrants have bled, and others muſt bleed," &c.

Emmett. My Lords, as to Mr. Sheares's proclamation, he was not of the Executive when I was.

Lord Chancellor. He was of the new Executive.

Emmett. I do not know he was of any Executive, except from what your Lordſhip ſays—but I believe he was joined with ſome others in framing a particular plan of inſurrection for Dublin and its neighbourhood—neither do I know what value he annexed to thoſe words in his proclation—but I can anſwer, that while I was of the Executive there was no ſuch deſign, but the contrary—for we conceived when one of you loſt your lives we loſt an hoſtage. Our intention was to ſeize you all, and keep you as hoſtages for the conduct of England, and after the revolution was over, if you could not live under the new government, to ſend you out of the country. I will add one thing more, which though it is not an anſwer to your queſtion, you may have a curioſity to hear. In ſuch a ſtruggle it was natural to expect confiſcations; our intention was, that every wife who had not inſtigated her huſband to reſiſtance ſhould be provided for out of the property, notwithſtanding confiſcations, and every

every child who was too young to be his own maſter, or form his own opinion, was to have a child's portion. Your Lordſhips will now judge how far we intended to be cruel.

LORD CHANCELLOR. Pray, Mr. Emmett, what cauſed the late inſurrection?

EMMETT. The Free Quarters, the Houſe Burnings, the Tortures, and the Military Executions, in the counties of Kildare, Carlow, and Wicklow.

LORD CHANCELLOR. Don't you think the arreſts of the 12th of March cauſed it?

EMMETT. No, but I believe if it had not been for theſe arreſts it would not have taken place; for the people, irritated by what they ſuffered, had been long preſſing the Executive to conſent to an inſurrection, but they had reſiſted or eluded it, and even determined to perſevere in the ſame line; after theſe arreſts, however, other perſons came forward, who were irritated, and thought differently, who conſented to let that partial inſurrection take place.

LORD CHANCELLOR. Were all the Executive arreſted or put to flight by the arreſts of the 12th of March?

EMMETT. Your Lordſhips will excuſe my anſwering to that queſtion, as it would point out individuals.

LORD CHANCELLOR. Did you not think the Government very fooliſh to let you proceed ſo long as they did?

EMMETT. No, my Lord, whatever I imputed to Government, I did not accuſe them of folly. I knew we were very attentively watched, but I thought they were right in letting us proceed. I have often ſaid, laughing among ourſelves,

ourſelves, that if they did right they would pay us for conducting the revolution, conceiving as I then did, and ſtill do, that a revolution is inevitable, unleſs ſpeedily prevented by very large meaſures of conciliation. It ſeemed to me an object with them, that it ſhould be conducted by moderate men, of good moral characters, liberal education, and ſome talents, rather than by intemperate men of bad characters, ignorant, and fooliſh; and into the hands of one or other of thoſe claſſes it undoubtedly will fall. I alſo imagined the Members of Government might be ſenſible of the difference between the change of their ſituation being effected by a ſudden and violent convulſion, or by the more gradual meaſures of a well conducted revolution, if it were effected ſuddenly by an inſurrection—and I need not tell your Lordſhips that had there been a general plan of acting, and the North had co-operated with Leinſter, the laſt inſurrection would have infalliby and rapidly ſucceeded; in ſuch a caſe, you would be tumbled at once from your pinnacle; but if a revolution were gradually accompliſhed, you would have had time to accommodate, and habituate yourſelves to your new ſituation. For theſe reaſons I imagined Government did not wiſh to irritate and puſh things forward.

Lord Chancellor. Pray, do you think Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform any objects with the common people?

Emmett. As to Catholic Emancipation, I don't think it matters a feather, or that the poor think of it. As to Parliamentary Reform, I don't think the common people ever thought of it, until it was inculcated to them, that a Reform would cauſe a removal of thoſe grievances which they actually do feel. From that time I believe they have become very much attached to the meaſure.

LORD CHANCELLOR. And do you think that idea has been ſucceſsfully inculcated into the common people?

EMMETT. It has not been my fortune to communicate much with them on that ſubject, ſo that I cannot undertake to ſay how far it has been ſucceſsfully inculcated into them; but of this I am certain, that ſince the eſtabliſhment of the United Iriſh ſyſtem it has been inculcated into all the middling claſſes, and much more among the common people, than ever it was before.

LORD CHANCELLOR. And what grievances would ſuch a Reformed Legiſlature remove?

EMMETT. In the firſt place, it would cauſe a compleat abolition of Tythes; in the next, by giving the common people an encreaſed value in the democracy, it would better their ſituation, and make them more reſpected by their ſuperiors; the condition of the poor would be ameliorated; and what is perhaps of more conſequence than all the reſt, a ſyſtem of national education would be eſtabliſhed.

Lord DILLON. The abolition of Tythes would be a very good thing; but don't you think it would be more beneficial to the landlords than the tenants?

Archbiſhop of CASHEL. Aye, it is they would benefit by it.

EMMETT. My Lords, I am ready to grant, that if Tythes were now aboliſhed, without a Reform, there are landlords who would raiſe the rent on their tenants, when they were making new leaſes, the full value of the Tythes, and, if they could, more; but if a Reform ſucceeded the

abolition of Tythes, ſuch a Reformed Legiſlature would very badly know, or very badly perform its duty, if it did not eſtabliſh ſuch a ſyſtem of landed leaſes as would prevent landlords from doing ſo; and let me tell your Lordſhips, that if a revolution ever takes place, a very different ſyſtem of political economy will be eſtabliſhed, from what has hitherto prevailed here.

Lord GLENTWORTH. Then your intention was to deſtroy the Church?

EMMETT. Pardon me, my Lord, my intention never was to deſtroy the Church. My wiſh decidedly was to overturn the Eſtabliſhment.

Lord DILLON. I underſtand you—and have it as it is in France?

EMMETT. As it is in many parts of America, my Lords.

Lord KILWARDEN. Pray, Mr. Emmett, do you know of any communications with France ſince your arreſt?

EMMETT. I do, my Lord, Mr. Cooke told me of one.

Lord KILWARDEN. But don't you in any other way, whether communications are ſtill going on between this country and France?

EMMETT. No, but I have no doubt that even after we ſhall have left this country, there will remain among the 500,000 and upwards which compoſe the Union, many perſons of ſufficient talents, enterprize, enthuſiaſm, and opportunity,

portunity, who will continue the old, or open a new communication with France, if it ſhall be neceſſary; and in looking over, in my own mind, the perſons whom I know of moſt talents and enterprize, I cannot help ſuggeſting to myſelf perſons I think moſt likely to do ſo; but I muſt be excuſed pointing at them.

THOMAS ADDIS EMMETT.

N. B. I have only noted down ſuch queſtions and anſwers as I imagine will not be inſerted in the Reports of the Secret Committee.

MR. O'CONNOR's EXAMINATION.

The Examination of ARTHUR O'CONNOR, *before the Secret Committee of the Houſe of Lords, Auguſt the* 9*th*, 1798.

COMMITTEE. Were you of the Executive of the Iriſh Union?

O'CONNOR. I was a Member of the Executive from the time I became a Member of the Union.

COM. When did the communication between the Union and France begin?

O'CONNOR. You, I ſuppoſe, have the Report I ſigned and delivered to the Iriſh Government, in conjunction with Mr. Emmett and Mr. M'Nevin?

[The Chancellor nodded aſſent; but none of the other Members of the Committee].

O'CONNOR. In that Report you will find the whole of that important tranſaction detailed. You will there find that the firſt alliance that was formed between the Union and France was in the middle of 1796. You will ſee that before the

the Executive entered into any alliance with France, or that it reſolved on reſiſtance to the tyranny of the Iriſh Government, a ſolemn meeting was held, when, after conſidering the uniform ſyſtem of coercion and oppoſition, which had been purſued from 1793 by the Iriſh Government againſt the Iriſh People; and finding that 1796 had opened with the ſanguinary laws, called the Inſurrection and Indemnity Acts, whereby the moſt ſacred rights of the Conſtitution were deſtroyed, the moſt groſs violations of the laws by the Magiſtrates were indemnified—that the expulſion of 4000 unoffending inhabitants of the county of Armagh, from their homes and properties, left no doubt that all protection was at an end, the Executive were decidedly of opinion, that by the principles of the Conſtitution, as eſtabliſhed by the Revolution of 1688, they were juſtified in calling in foreign aid, and in reſiſting a Government which had forfeited all claims to obedience.

Com. You are under a miſtake: the Inſurrection and Indemnity Acts were not paſſed until the end of 1796.

O'Connor. I am confident I cannot be miſtaken; for I know that theſe acts were what filled up the meaſure of that oppreſſion which decided the Executive to ſeek foreign aid; and, I am confident, it did not come to that determination until May, 1796; and I alſo recollect that I left this country in February, 1796; and before I left it, the Attorney General had moved theſe two bills; but if you can have any doubts, your Journals will clear them up.

Com. When did the Military Organization begin?

O'Connor. Shortly after the Executive had reſolved on reſiſtance to the Iriſh Government, and on an alliance with France, in May, 1796.

Com.

COM. Were there no communications with France before the middle of 1796?

O'CONNOR. None. I can confidently affirm, that until the conduct of the Iriſh Government forced the Executive to reſiſt, which was, as I have ſtated, in the middle of 1796, no alliance whatſoever was formed between the Union and France.

COM. Did the Executive imagine the North would riſe if the French landed?

O'CONNOR. We had no doubt but the North was ſenſible of the tyranny of the Government, and that they would take the firſt opportunity to free their country.

COM. When was the firſt communication with France after the Bantry Bay expedition?

O'CONNOR. I was a cloſe priſoner in the Tower, from February, 1797, to Auguſt following it; in Auguſt I heard of the firſt communication after the Bantry Bay expedition.

COM. What did the diſpatch contain?

O'CONNOR. It ſtated that a conſiderable force of 15,000 or 20,000 men were embarked at the Texel, and that they would ſail in a week.

COM. What prevented their ſailing?

O'CONNOR. The wind continued directly contrary for ſeveral weeks after, and the changes which took place on the 4th of September probably had ſome effect on the expedition.

COM.

Com. Was it mentioned in the diſpatch where the landing ſhould take place?

O'Connor. It was not; the Directory do not communicate ſuch important intelligence, except to thoſe to whom it may be abſolutely neceſſary.

Com. Had you any intelligence of the invaſion at Bantry Bay?

O'Connor. There was a meſſenger who arrived in November, 1796; he ſaid the French would arrive ſhortly, but did not ſay where.

Com. Had you any other intelligence?

O'Connor. We received a letter about the time of this meſſenger's arrival, (a French agent,) which ſtated that the expedition was poſtponed; this has never been accounted for.

Com. Was there a perſon ſent in ſpring, 1797, to France?

O'Connor, During the time theſe meſſengers were ſent off I was a cloſe priſoner.

Com. Did you ſee Dr. M'Nevin on his return from France?

O'Connor. I ſhall not anſwer any thing about Dr. M'Nevin, nor any other perſon.

Com. Oh! he has been here.

O'Connor. If ſo, there is the leſs occaſion for you to aſk me about him; I ſhall not anſwer any queſtions of any one.

Com.

COM. Did you ſee any perſon who returned from France towards the end of 1797?

O'CONNOR. I did.

COM. What intelligence did he bring?

O'CONNOR. When he left France, he was aſſured that aſſiſtance would be ſent, though no time was mentioned; but ſo conſiderable a change had taken place in France on the 4th September, 1797, and our meſſenger having left Paris before that period, and not arriving here till after, we did not know what meaſures the new arrangement might give riſe to.

COM. Have you heard that ſome converſation on Iriſh affairs had paſſed between General Vallence, and ſome perſons of this country?

O'CONNOR. I cannot conceive that General Vallence could have any thing to do with the buſineſs; he was an emigrant.

COM. Was there any connexion between the Union and the Britiſh and Scotch Societies.

O'CONNOR. The Executive carefully avoided any.

COM. Was there not ſome connexion between individuals?

O'CONNOR. I cannot ſay what individuals may have done; the Executive was careful to confine itſelf to the affairs of Ireland. As one of the Executive, I can ſay, I never had the moſt diſtant with any Britiſh Society; nor did I ever interfere with the politics of England.

COM.

COM. Do you know any thing of a Loan being negotiated for with France or Spain?

O'CONNOR. Some of our agents were ordered to negotiate for half a million with either of theſe Powers.

COM. Was your place in the Executive filled up when you left this in January, 1798?

O'CONNOR. My place in the Executive of Leinſter was filled up.

COM. Were you not proprietor of The Preſs?

O'CONNOR. I was, until it was deſtroyed by the Iriſh Government.

COM. Was it not for the purpoſe of promoting the Union that you ſet it up.

O'CONNOR. The inculcating Union amongſt my countrymen, was a principal object; I had alſo in view to expoſe the outrages and tyranny of the Iriſh Government; but it was not ſet up by the Union; it was my own individual undertaking; it was under my ſole controul; and it was ſet up by me on the broadeſt baſis, for the ſupport of the liberties of my country.

ARTHUR O'CONNOR.

MR. O'CONNOR's EXAMINATION.

The Examination of ARTHUR O'CONNOR *before the Secret Committee of the Houſe of Commons, 16th of Auguſt, 1798.*

COMMITTEE. Explain the firſt formation of the alliance between the Iriſh Union and the French?

O'CONNOR. If you have ſeen the report I ſigned and delivered in conjunction with Emmett and M'Nevin, it will not be neceſſary I ſhould go very fully into that important tranſaction; but if you have not ſeen it, I will explain it more fully.

COM. We have not ſeen the report you allude to.

O'CONNOR. Sometime in 1795, or the beginning of 1796, a letter was received by the Executive of the Union from France, from ſome individuals of the Union, who had fled from perſecution; in which they mentioned, that they had made ſuch a repreſentation of the ſtate of Ireland, that they believed the French would be induced to treat with the Union, to free us from the tyranny under which we groaned.

This

This letter was not acted upon by the Executive at the time it was received, from their unwillingneſs to have recourſe to foreign aid, except in the laſt reſort, and in the hope, that the effects on the popular mind from the tyrannical meaſures which Government had purſued, would induce them to abandon their meaſures of coercion, and to adopt meaſures congenial to the wiſhes of the people. But when the Executive ſaw the year 1796 open with the Inſurrection Bill—that 4000 unoffending inhabitants of the county Armagh had been driven from their homes, on account of their religious opinions, by a lawleſs banditti, who were not only not reſtrained by Government, but aided and inſtigated by its Magiſtracy, and that an act was paſſed to indemnify the moſt groſs violation of the moſt ſacred laws by the Agents and Magiſtrates of Government. Rouſed by theſe freſh inſtances of tyranny, the Executive of the Union held a moſt important meeting to conſider the ſtate of the country—to determine on what meaſures theſe ſanguinary, tyrannical proceedings of Government made it neceſſary for us to adopt. The views and conduct of thoſe who exerciſed the powers of Government were coolly and diſpaſſionately diſcuſſed. The Executive were convinced, and the ſame conviction was in every mind, that a ſyſtem of monopoly and uſurpation had abſorbed every part of the Conſtitution which belonged to the people; that thoſe who exerciſed the aſſumed right of repreſenting the people of Ireland, were ſelf-conſtituted; that they acted with the ſole view of advancing their individual intereſts; and that what was called the Emancipation of the Iriſh Legiſlature in 1782, was nothing more than freeing a ſet of ſelf-conſtituted individuals, from the abſolute controul of the Britiſh Legiſlature, that they might be at liberty to ſell themſelves to the corrupt controul of the Britiſh Miniſtry. The Executive conſidered, which had the Conſtitution on their ſide, they who contended that the Houſe of Commons ſhould be filled with the real Repreſentatives of the People of Ireland, or thoſe individuals who contended, that it ſhould be

filled

filled with themſelves. This was the great point at iſſue, by which the paſt, the preſent, and the future conduct of the Iriſh Government was to be judged, without even appealing to the impreſcriptible right of a People to put down oppreſſion. Standing on the ground of the Conſtitution, the Executive looked back upon the ſanguinary, tyrannical meaſures, which had been invariably purſued by the Iriſh Government and Legiſlature, under the controul of the Britiſh Miniſtry from 1793, they were convinced, that if the moſt faint connexion exiſted between thoſe who filled the places of the People's Repreſentatives, and the People, no Government or Legiſlature durſt commit ſuch unexampled outrages as thoſe which had been perpetrated, and indemnified in Ireland; that no lawful or juſt Government could by any poſſibility be driven to burn houſes, or to torture the perſons of the people to extort obedience. The Executive looked back to the melancholy hiſtory of Ireland, they ſaw how dreadfully it had been torn and waſted by religious diſſentions. The firſt object of the Executive was to deſtroy religious diſcord, and promote brotherly love and affection among all the people of Ireland, be their religious belief what it may. The next object of the Union was to promote a Reform of the Government, and to regain thoſe rights which were the people's birthright by the Conſtitution; yet the oath which bound the people to theſe firſt duties of Chriſtianity, Morality, and the Conſtitution, was puniſhed with death by the Inſurrection Act, which by ſome other of its clauſes broke down every barrier of Liberty: that not only every effort was made to oppoſe us in theſe our exertions to deſtroy religious diſcord, but that no means were left untried to organize a ſect, founded upon the diabolical oath of extermination, whoſe inſtitution was avowedly for the purpoſe of perpetuating religious diſcord and rancour. This was not all—the expulſion of 4000 Iriſh citizens, with every aggravation of cruelty and horror, which was followed by the Indemnity Act, left no doubt on the mind of the Executive, that all

the exceſſes and outrages were either openly or ſecretly the acts of the Government and Legiſlature of Ireland. Struck with the enormity of theſe acts and outrages, the Executive looked back to the hiſtory of James II. and after comparing his conduct with the conduct of the Iriſh Government, they were decidedly of opinion, that the conduct of the Iriſh Government had been beyond compariſon, more tyrannical and cruel. They were of opinion, that if the people were juſtified in calling in foreign aid, to reſcue their liberties and conſtitution from James's government, it was infinitely more juſtifiable in us to call in foreign aid. The Executive were of opinion, that the Iriſh Government had not only forfeited all title to obedience from the people, but that we were called on to reſiſt its moſt unparalleled uſurpation and tyranny. That as the people of Ireland had been diſarmed, contrary to the right of every free people; and as the tyranny under which the Government was upheld, was ſupported by the men and the money of one foreign nation, we ſtood peculiarly neceſſitated to ſeek the aid of ſome other foreign power. Actuated by this reaſoning, the Executive ſent to ſeek an alliance with France, in May, 1796, which was actually formed in the Auguſt following, the firſt which was formed between the Iriſh Union and France.

Com. Did you not go to Hamburgh, and afterwards to Switzerland, in the ſummer of 1796, in company with another perſon?

O'Connor. This queſtion points at Lord Edward Fitzgerald; and as it is notorious he did accompany me to Switzerland in 1796, and although my friend is no more, I will not anſwer any thing, which could in the moſt diſtant manner lead to the diſcloſure of any act of his; beſides, I am not bound by the ſtipulation I have entered into, for ſaving the lives of thoſe you have in your power, to diſcloſe any act of my life prior to my becoming a Member of the Union;

Union; but ſo little am I inclined to withhold the account of any part of our conduct, and ſo fully am I convinced of the rectitude of what we have done, that if you will be ſatisfied with the ſubſtance of the tranſactions of the Union, without leading to names or perſons, I will give it.

Com. Well, we will be content with the ſubſtance, without any alluſion to names or perſons.

O'Connor. In May, 1796, after the important meeting of the Executive I have juſt mentioned was held, they ſent to France, to adjuſt the terms of the alliance, to plan the manner the ſuccours ſhould be ſeconded, ſo as to inſure ſucceſs. The moſt important part of the terms was, that France was to aſſiſt Ireland in freeing herſelf from the tyranny of thoſe who exerciſed the Government of Ireland, and that Ireland ſhould be free to frame whatever conſtitution ſhe might think fit to adopt. The ſame expedition which was afterwards equipped, and ſent to Ireland under Hoche, was agreed on, and every thing was ſettled, which could enſure ſucceſs on its landing. At the ſame time it was propoſed to the perſon who formed this firſt alliance between France and the Union, that a body ſhould be ſent againſt England to cauſe a diverſion, to retaliate for the Quiberon expedition. To diſſuade the French from the invaſion of England, this Iriſh negociator uſed every argument in his power. He ſaid, from his knowledge of England, the beſt men of that country would be moſt hoſtile to any interference of the French in the government of their country, on the ſame juſt principles that they condemned the interference of England in the government of France.—That the ſituation of Ireland and England were very different, that in Ireland the people were moſt ſolicitous for the aid of France, to reſcue them from foreign and domeſtic tyranny; but that the majority of the people of England would be averſe to their interference—that many of the

people

people of England were beginning to ſee and feel the ruin the Miniſters had brought on the nation, by engaging in the war; but that if they invaded their country, it would bury all conſideration of the injuſtice of the war, under the immediate conſideration of ſelf defence; that it would prove the greateſt ſupport to an unpopular Miniſtry, by giving them an unlimited power over the remaining wealth of England, in any way they might wiſh to take it, while a guinea could be extorted. Theſe, together with other arguments, were thought concluſive by thoſe to whom they were addreſſed, and the invaſion of England in 1796 was abandoned.

COM. Was not M. Barthelemy privy to theſe tranſactions?

O'CONNOR. I will not anſwer any queſtion where the name of any perſon is mentioned.

COM. But he is a foreigner.

O'CONNOR. I care not; the name of a foreigner or a countryman ſhall be equally inviolable with me.

COM. Was it not at Paris this firſt alliance was formed?

O'CONNOR. It was not; if it was, you would have no need to aſk me the queſtion.

COM. Was it at Liſle?

O'CONNOR. It was not.

COM. Were you of the Executive?

O'Connor. I was of the Executive from the time I became a Member of the Union in 1796, until I was obliged to fly my country abruptly in January, 1798, to avoid being taken off by a foul plot which was laid by ſome of the under agents of the Iriſh Government, but which my reſpect for the ſafety of thoſe who gave me the intimation of it, obliges me to keep ſecret.

Com. Inform us of the progreſs and extent of the organization.

O'Connor. When I was impriſoned in February, 1797, the organization had made conſiderable progreſs in Ulſter, and things were in train to extend it to the other three provinces. On my liberation in the Auguſt following, I found the means we employed before my impriſonment had been ſucceſsful in extending the organization, particularly in Leinſter; but that it had been thrown into confuſion by the burnings, hangings, and torturings, which had been extended from Ulſter to the other parts of the country.—But to ſuch a degree had the minds of the people been exaſperated by the cruelties of the Government, the diſpoſition towards the Union was ſo ſtrong in the three provinces, that in four months after my liberation I was enabled as one of the Northern Executive (there being no Executive for Leinſter during this period) to organize 70,000 men in Leinſter only, while the number of thoſe who took the teſt of the Union was nearly equal to the population of the three provinces; to ſuch a degree did the Iriſh Government raiſe the reſentment of the people againſt it, by the cruelties it practiſed to ſupport its powers, and to keep down the national ſpirit for liberty.

Com. Was not your object in forming the organization to effect a revolution?

O'Connor. If our mere object had been to effect a revolution, the Britiſh Miniſtry, and the Iriſh Government were effecting one more violently and rapidly than we wiſhed for; we clearly perceived, that the meaſures, they adopted to prevent revolution, were the moſt effectual that could be deviſed to enſure it. When we viewed the ſtate of the Britiſh empire, we were convinced we need not take much pains merely to make revolution. If that was our ſole object, we knew that the Iriſh Government, of itſelf, could not exiſt one month; we ſaw that it was the men and the money of England, which upheld the Iriſh Government; we therefore looked to the ſtate of Great Britain, and conſidered the ſtate of its actual Government, and we were of opinion, that the meaſures which the preſent Miniſtry had purſued, were the moſt rapidly ruinous which could be adoped. We examined her ſtate before the war, we ſaw, that as before the enormous expenditure, which the war occaſioned, the Miniſter could not extort more than ſixteen millions annual revenue, it would be impoſſible, after hundreds of millions of the national capital had been ſquandered, that thirty millions annual revenue, could by any phyſical poſſibility, be extorted, which was the leaſt her peace eſtabliſhment could amount to. But that even ſuppoſing thirty millions annual revenue could be raiſed on Great Britain, experience convinced us, that liberty muſt be deſtroyed by ſuch additional means of corruption being thrown into the hands of the Executive; and we were convinced, that a nation which had loſt her liberty could not long ſupport ſuch monſtrous burthens, on the principle, that capital, like fluid, would find its level; we were of opinion, that as the profits of capital would be higher in France than in England, the vaſt exhauſtion of capital which had taken place in France, would be repleniſhed on a peace, by the flowing in of a conſiderable portion of Britiſh capital, and that this diſpoſition on the part of the Britiſh capitaliſt, to tranſport his wealth, would be farther encreaſed by a deſire to avoid the enormous taxes, to which his induſtry and his

profits would be expoſed. Theſe conſiderations, amongſt many others, left no doubt on our minds, that the powers of England, by which alone the tyranny and uſurpation of the Iriſh Government and Legiſlature were ſupported, muſt be very ſhortly deſtroyed.

Com. If you did not organize for the purpoſe of effecting a revolution, what other object had you in view?

O'Connor. We ſaw with ſorrow the cruelties practiſed by the Iriſh Government had raiſed a dreadful ſpirit of revenge in the hearts of the people; we ſaw with horror that to anſwer their immediate views, the Iriſh Government had renewed the old religious feuds: we were moſt anxious to have ſuch authorities as the organization ready conſtituted to prevent the dreadful tranſports of popular fury. We hoped that by having Committees for each barony, County Committees, and Provincial Committees; by holding out the benefits of the revolution to thoſe who ſupported it, and by withholding its benefits from thoſe who ſhould diſgrace it by popular exceſſes, we ſhould have been able to reſtrain the people. But thoſe who had monopolized the whole political power of the Conſtitution, finding, that they ſtood in need of ſome part of the population, and that from their monopoly being ſo directly oppoſite to the intereſt of all claſſes of the Iriſh nation, they could not hope for the ſupport of any (be their religion what it may) on the ſcore of politics, except thoſe in the pay of Government. Finding how neceſſary it was to have ſome part of the population on their ſide, they had recourſe to the old religious feuds, and ſet on foot an organization of Proteſtants, whoſe Fanaticiſm would not permit them to ſee, they were enliſted under the banners of religion, to fight for political uſurpation they abhorred. No doubt, by theſe means you have gained a temporary aid, but by deſtroying the organization of the Union, and exaſperating the great body of the

the people, you will one day pay dearly for the aid you have derived from this temporary ſhift.

Com. Government had nothing to do with the Orange Syſtem, nor their oath of extermination.

O'Connor. You, my Lord, [Caſtlereagh] from the ſtation you fill, muſt be ſenſible that the Executive of any country has it in its power to collect a vaſt maſs of information, and you muſt know from the ſecret nature, and the zeal of the Union, that its Executive muſt have the moſt minute information of every act of the Iriſh Government. As one of the Executive, it came to my knowledge, that conſiderable ſums of money were expended throughout the nation, in endeavouring to extend the Orange Syſtem, and that the Orange oath of extermination was adminiſtered; when theſe facts are coupled, not only with general impunity, which has been uniformly extended towards all the acts of this infernal aſſociation, but the marked encouragement its members have received from Government, I find it impoſſible to exculpate the Government from being the parent and protector of theſe ſworn extirpators.

Com. Were not ſome of the Union very Monarchical?

O'Connor. My firſt political acquaintance with the body of my Catholic countrymen, to whom I ſuppoſe you allude, was in 1791, whilſt I was High Sheriff of the county of Cork, when I defended the Catholics from an attack which was made upon them by the monopoliſts of our repreſentation in that part of Ireland. At that time the Catholics of Ireland were juſt beginning to feel the influence of the French revolution, and to be ſenſible of the degrading ſtate to which centuries of oppreſſion had reduced them; they were, however, ſtrongly addicted to Monarchy,

and

and made their firſt advances in purſuit of freedom in a very humble manner; but the contempt and inſult with which their firſt petition was ſcouted from the Houſe of Commons, rouſed them to a ſenſe of their rights as men.—In 1792, they again petitioned, but in terms of boldneſs proportioned to the inſult with which their former petition had been treated. They were joined by the Preſbyterians, and the contemptuous manner with which both petitions were refuſed, created an union of ſentiment, whereby the Catholics were led to examine what title to power thoſe had who thus inſultingly denied the joint deſires of the great maſs of the Iriſh nation. They paſſed from any explanation with the Iriſh Parliament, and negociated with the Britiſh Miniſtry, whom they found controuled every act of the Government and Legiſlature of Ireland. While the Catholics were ſucceeding with the Britiſh Miniſtry in England, the Borough Mongers of Ireland were moſt active amongſt the Grand Juries in the ſummer of 1792, in pledging lives and fortunes, never to grant the claims of their Catholic countrymen. When the Parliament met in 1793, the mandate came from the Britiſh Miniſtry to accede to a partial emancipation of the Catholics. This was not all: in the ſeſſion the Houſe of Commons reſolved that the National Repreſentation ſtood in need of Reform: they raiſed the hopes of the Iriſh but to blaſt them afterwards. This moſt impolitic conduct brought the Iriſh Government into the utmoſt diſrepute, and was followed by a declaration on the part of the Catholics in 1793, to ſtand or fall with their countrymen on the great queſtion of obtaining a National Repreſentation. From this time the Iriſh Government ſeemed to abandon all idea of conciliating the Catholics, and to think only of puniſhing them for what they thought ingratitude. In purſuance of this plan, all idea of Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform was ſcouted; Britiſh troops were poured into Ireland, and proſecutions commenced againſt ſome of the Catholic and Preſbyterean leaders

leaders in 1794, on ſuch evidence as clearly demonſtrated they were undertaken from vindictive motives of reſentment. Theſe meaſures were calculated to eradicate the inveterate predeliction for Monarchy from the hearts of the Iriſh Catholics. In 1795, the Britiſh Miniſtry appeared ſenſible of the conſequences which had reſulted from the meaſures which had been purſued hitherto in Ireland; and an attempt was entered on to regain the Catholics, by ſending Lord Fitzwilliam, with powers to chooſe his own Councils. The hopes of the national mind were raiſed, particularly of the Catholics; but the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, the abandonment of the projected political changes, the renewal of the reign of terror and coercion, totally alienated the minds of the Catholics from their confirmed propenſity to Monarchy. No doubt the French Revolution had a great and powerful effect in exciting the Catholics of Ireland to attain their long loſt Liberty; but it was the meaſures of the Britiſh Miniſtry, and the Iriſh Government, which hurried them into their preſent violent deteſtation of Monarchy, and their preſent ardent love, Repreſentative Democracy, which was confirmed in the minds of the very loweſt orders, by being familiarized with the organization of the Union, and by obſerving its good effects.

Com. Why, what opinion have the lower claſſes of the people of political ſubjects?

O'Connor. The loweſt ſocieties of the Union converſed freely of the corruption, the uſurpation, and the venality of Parliament. While I was a Member of the Houſe of Commons, you know the frequent converſation amongſt the Members was—how much has ſuch an one given for his ſeat? From whom did he purchaſe? Has not ſuch an one ſold his borough? Has not ſuch a Lord bought? Has not ſuch a Peer ſo many Members in this Houſe? Was not ſuch a Member with the Lord Lieutenant's Secretary, to inſiſt on ſome

ſome greater place or penſion? Did not the Secretary refuſe it? Has he not gone into the Oppoſition? Theſe, and ſuch like facts, are as well known to the loweſt claſſes of the Union as to yourſelves.

A MEMBER OF THE COM. Mr. O'Connor is perfectly right; I have heard the loweſt claſſes of the people talk in that ſtyle.

O'CONNOR. The people are conſcious you are ſelf conſtituted, and not their delegates; men who have no other object in view but to advance their own individual intereſts.

A MEMBER OF THE COM. That we are a parcel of placemen and penſioners?

O'CONNOR. Exactly ſo.

COM. What is the object the people have in view at preſent?

O'CONNOR. I believe they have laid by for the inſtant all idea of ſpeculative politics, and think only how they ſhall annihilate the inſupportable uſurpation and cruelty of the Britiſh and Iriſh Government, and how they ſhall beſt avenge the blood which has been ſhed, and the tortures which have been inflicted, to ſupport a Government they deteſt.

COM. Was there not a diſunion in the Executive?

O'CONNOR. From the time I was elected one of the Executive, I never experienced any diſagreement?

COM.

Com. Were there not men who could influence the people to diſobey the orders of the Executive?

O'Connor. On the contrary, they were always obeyed with the moſt zealous alacrity. No doubt the ſecret manner in which we were obliged to conduct the buſineſs of the Union, gave great ſcope to intrigue; yet I found that wherever religious prejudices were placed in the way of political liberty, the people invariably diſregarded the former, and adhered to the latter.

Com. Did not the Executive form a plan of a Conſtitution for Ireland's future government?

O'Connor. The Executive never thought itſelf inveſted with power to meddle with the future Conſtitution of Ireland, that could have been the work only of thoſe, whom the people of Ireland might elect for that expreſs purpoſe. We were elected ſolely for to deviſe means of wreſting power out of the hands of men, who had violated every part of the Conſtitution, and liberties of Ireland, and outraged every feeling and right of man, by the means they employed to retain their uſurpation.

Com. What do you think would tranquilize the people of Ireland, and induce them to give up their arms?

O'Connor. That is a queſtion which would require the beſt head to anſwer, and the beſt heart to execute; I am not ſo ignorant of human nature as to ſuppoſe, that thoſe men who have ſo long engroſſed the enormous emoluments of ill, and unjuſtly acquired power, will ever reſtore them to the people, however manifeſt it muſt appear to an unprejudiced mind, that the moſt dreadful ruin awaits the preſent fruitleſs effort which is made to retain them.

Com. But what, in your opinion, would tranquilize Ireland, and induce the people to give up their arms?

O'Connor. Under the preſent ſyſtem of uſurpation and corruption, every ſource by which the Iriſh nation could acquire wealth, is betrayed to Great Britain, and even the wretched pittance her induſtry gathers is thrown a prey to monopoliſts of her political power, who have ſold her deareſt rights. By this double plunder, the people of Ireland are deſtitute, not only of every convenience and comfort of life, but of the bare neceſſaries to ſupport their exiſtence. If you would tranquilize a people, you muſt ceaſe to oppreſs them—you muſt ceaſe to betray them; make them happy, and you will make them tranquil. The great and main ſource, from which the wants of a people are ſupplied, is agriculture; yet near two millions worth of the rude produce of the agriculture of Ireland is annually exported to pay non-reſident landlords; for this there is no return; it is all loſs to the Iriſh nation, and is, of itſelf, a ſufficient drain to impoveriſh a greater nation for extent than Ireland. The commerce of Ireland has to cope with the moſt commercial nation on earth in its very vicinage, under the diſadvantage of a general admiſſion of every ſpecies of manufactured and foreign produce on one ſide, and of as unlimited rejection on the other, with ſcarcely one exception. When the agricultural produce of a people —when their home and foreign markets are ſold, the conſequence muſt be, that they muſt experience a great dearth of national capital; hence the beſt machinery, and the moſt extenſive diviſion of labour, by both which, labour is ſo wonderfully abridged, the low profits which reſult from abundant capital, and the being able to give long credits, are all loſt to a nation bereft of every means to acquire wealth. By this cruel injuſtice, England can ſupply the people of Ireland with their manufactures cheaper than the Iriſh can manufacture their own materials, whereby our manufactures (the other great ſource for acquiring national capital) ſhares

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the ſame fate with our agriculture ; and the abuſed laws by which the fiſheries of Ireland have been deſtroyed, compleat the cataſtrophe of the ruin of Iriſh induſtry, in the ſeveral ways of acquiring wealth with which God and Nature have endowed her. But this is not all ; the ſmall portion of wealth which the Iriſh nation acquires under theſe mutilated means is ſubject to a thouſand of the moſt groſs extortions. A moſt monſtrous eſtabliſhment (and that for one-tenth of the nation only), under the name of ſupporting the Miniſters of Religion, but really for the purpoſe of the moſt flagrant corruption—a vaſt military eſtabliſhment, which thoſe who exerciſe the powers of Government are obliged to keep up, as the ſole means by which they can maintain the actual uſurpation of all popular and conſtitutional rights—ſinecure places—penſions—and the various ways which are hourly deviſed for draining the people. Theſe, if you would tranquilize the people, you muſt aboliſh—you muſt reſtore to them thoſe means for acquiring wealth which God and Nature gave them—you muſt not ſubject the wealth they do acquire to any exaction which is not abſolutely neceſſary, for the ſupport of a Government capable of affording them protection. The reſult of the pillage which the Iriſh nation at preſent undergoes is, that it diminiſhes national capital—that wages are low, and employment ſo doubtful, the greateſt cauſes of national miſery. The next great evil which reſults from this great dearth of national capital is, that land has become the only material the people have to work on, which cannot be exported ; every one is forced to hire it, as his only means of employment ; and the competition has made the rents of lands much higher than they otherwiſe would be, whilſt the tythes (the moſt impolitic of impoſts) are an endleſs ſource of vexation and litigation between the people and the Miniſters of Religion. If you would correct all theſe evils, reſtore to the Iriſh nation its juſt rights ; then wealth muſt flow in from every quarter ; thouſands of means of exerciſing induſtry will preſent themſelves ; wages will be liberal ;

liberal ; rents will be moderate ; and it will be as impoſſible to diſturb the public mind, when the reign of juſtice ſhall be eſtabliſhed, as it will be to tranquilize it as long as the actual ſyſtem of uſurpation, plunder, and tyranny ſhall be continued. It is oppreſſion which has armed the people of Ireland —by juſtice only you can diſarm them. A juſt Government, which emanates from the people, and which exiſts but for the people's protection and happineſs, need never dread their arms, or deſire to ſee them diſarmed. As long as you are anxious to diſarm the people, ſo long you have no reaſon to expect they ſhould be tranquil.

COM. You have made politics and political economy your ſtudy : what political changes do you think would tranquilize Ireland ?

O'CONNOR. Reſtore the vital principle of the conſtitution, which you have deſtroyed, by reſtoring to the people the choice of Repreſentatives, who ſhall controul the Executive, by frugal grants of the public money, and by exacting a rigid account of its expenditure. Let the people have Repreſentatives they can call friends—men in whom they can place confidence—men they have really choſen—men choſen for ſuch time, that if they ſhould attempt to betray them, they may ſpeedily have an opportunity of diſcarding. Give us ſuch a Houſe of Commons, and I will anſwer for the tranquility of my country. Place but the public purſe in the hands of ſuch Repreſentatives, and I will anſwer for it, the people of Ireland will not have to complain of the profligacy, the tyranny, or uſurpation of Government or Legiſlators.—How ſuch a Houſe of Commons could be choſen (if it was not the intereſt of thoſe who monopolize the national repreſentation to oppoſe it) would not be a difficult taſk to deviſe.

COM.

Com. Was not the Union to deſtroy the conſtitution?

O'Connor. We could not have an intention of deſtroying a conſtitution, of which we did not believe there was one particle in exiſtence. A Houſe of Commons ſo far choſen by the people, and ſo far independent of the Crown, as to controul it, by its ſole exerciſe of power over the public purſe, was the vital principle of the Conſtitution, it was by taking the demands from time to time, to this power over the public purſe, that thoſe rights, one after another, have been gained, which rights conſtitute the conſtitution. The inſtant ſuch an Houſe of Commons ceaſed to exiſt, and that it was ſupplanted by a Houſe of Commons which repreſents itſelf; from that inſtant the vital principle which created the Conſtitution, and which alone could preſerve it from bankruptcy and ruin, was at an end. It was not to deſtroy this vital principle of the Conſtitution, it was to put down a Parliament of ſelf conſtituted men, who firſt deſtroyed every veſtige of the Conſtitution, and then committed every outrage and cruelty to ſupport their uſurpation.

Com. Why, did you not intend to ſet up a Republic?

O'Connor. I have already told you we did not conceive that any power was veſted in us to ſet up any Conſtitution. We were choſen ſolely for the purpoſe of putting down your uſurpation of the Conſtitution and Liberty of the Iriſh nation. I know not whether thoſe who would have been choſen by the people of Ireland for the purpoſe of forming a Conſtitution, would have adopted the Conſtitution you have deſtroyed. I know not whether it is poſſible to build up ſuch a Conſtitution, now it has been deſtroyed. I know not whether they would have formed a Conſtitution purely repreſentative, from a conviction that an elective government, in which the people, whether by their delegates, or in their proper perſons, exerciſe a controul over the government, I

hold

hold to be a Republic. As ſuch, the Conſtitution (as long as a Houſe of Commons made any part of it) was a Republic; but whether the future government of Ireland may be leſs, equally, or more democratical than the Conſtitution, thoſe who ſhall be choſen to frame it can alone determine.

Com. Was there any thing implied in the Oath of the Union, than what was ſet forth in the Teſt?

O'Connor. Certainly not; for all we wanted was to create a Houſe of Commons which ſhould repreſent the whole people of Ireland; and for that purpoſe we ſtrove to diſpel all religious diſtinctions from our political Union, and after we had deſtroyed your uſurpation of our national repreſentation, and that we had ſet up a real repreſentation of the whole people of Ireland, we were convinced there was no evil which ſuch a Houſe of Commons could not reach; we were ſatisfied, that to ſet up ſuch a Houſe of Commons was our right, and that whether the other parts of the Conſtitution could ſtand or not, after the Houſe of Commons was reſtored to the Conſtitution, yet we were aſſured that our liberties would exiſt, but that without a conſtitutional Houſe of Commons, the Government muſt of its own nature ſpeedily end in bankruptcy and ruin, from the vaſt expence of the corruption and force which it required to uphold it.

Com. How was the late riſing occaſioned?

O'Connor. I have already told you how; from the beginning of the French Revolution the meaſures purſued by the Britiſh Miniſtry and the Iriſh Government have worked up the minds of the people of Ireland to their preſent highly irritated ſtate—at one time raiſing their hopes—at another time blaſting thoſe hopes; at one time promiſing Emancipation and Reform—and at another time reſiſting

reſiſting both with fire and ſword—burning houſes—hanging —laſhing—and torturing—means unjuſtifiable to ſupport any ſyſtem, and which a juſt Government could not for one inſtant ſtand in need of. Theſe no human patience could endure, and yet (from a conviction that they were practiſed to goad the people to a premature attempt to put down their oppreſſors) as long as I could remain, I uſed every means in my power to endure a little longer ; but when, to avoid being diſpatched, I was forced to fly, thoſe into whoſe hands the executive power of the Union was veſted, yielded to the preſſing ſolicitations of the people of the moſt oppreſſed parts, who were deſirous to riſk their lives, in order to rid themſelves of the cruelties they hourly experienced.

Com. Are there not Committees forming at the preſent moment ?

O'Connor. I know not what Committees are forming ; but I am well aſſured the people of Ireland will never abandon the Union, and that its principles will never be eradicated from their hearts until we obtain our object.

Com. How can deputations be ſent to France ?

O'Connor. By as many ways as there are human devices.

Com. Could you get one to go to France now ?

O'Connor. Thouſands, if neceſſary.

Com. How is that poſſible ?

O'Connor. Unleſs you deſtroy every veſtige of commerce, we can find no difficulty in ſending to France. Not a ſhip

a ſhip that ſails, that contains an United Iriſhman, that does not contain a faithful meſſenger.

COM. Do you know any thing of the future plans of the French ?

O'CONNOR. I do not; but I firmly believe they will never abandon their engagements with us.

COM. Were there many men of property in the Union ?

O'CONNOR. Men of property uſually conſult their own perſonal intereſts, which is a great check to any generous or diſintereſted exertion of patriotiſm; ſuch men ſeldom run great hazards in the public cauſe. If we had been content with a hollow ſupport, we might have had abundance of them; however, there were many of conſiderable property, who upon principle were of the Union.

COM. Would you not have deſtroyed the Proteſtant Religion, and the Proteſtant Eſtabliſhment ?

O'CONNOR. The deſtruction of Religion is one thing, the deſtruction of Eſtabliſhments another; the great and juſt principle upon which the Union is formed is the moſt perfect freedom for all religions alike. We are of opinion that the preſent monſtrous Proteſtant Eſtabliſhment in Ireland is a grievous burden on Preſbyterians, Catholics, Quakers, Proteſtants, in ſhort, on all the people of Ireland—highly unjuſt to thoſe who are not of the Proteſtant religion, and highly injurious to the Proteſtant religion itſelf; for we are convinced it would work a very deſirable change in the Proteſtant Clergy of Ireland, if they were made to owe their maintenance to a faithful diſcharge of their functions, inſtead of obtaining it by a baſe and diſgraceful cringing to corrupt

patrons;

patrons; and that if there was no other objection to tythes than their being an endleſs ſource of diſcord between a Chriſtian Miniſtry and the People, they ought to be aboliſhed.

Com. How did you mean to pay the half million you wiſhed to borrow from France or Spain?

O'Connor. When the preſent Government can borrow millions on millions, we could have had no difficulty in paying half a million. If millions can be had out of Iriſh induſtry, by a Government which has ſacrificed every means of acquiring wealth, we have no doubt a Government that reſtores thoſe rights could eaſily find means to diſcharge any debts we ſhould contract in the conteſt.

Com. Do you imagine Ireland could exiſt as an independent nation?

O'Connor. I have not a doubt of it. We have five millions of a brave hardy people, and if we had the government in our hands but for a ſhort time, to organize and to arm them, we could defy the whole world. Once poſſeſſed of a country, they would fight for it; and it is one of the ſtrongeſt countries in Europe by nature. It muſt have a tactic peculiar to itſelf, and the people of Ireland muſt execute that tactic.

Com. Could not Great Britain deſtroy your trade with her navy?

O'Connor. I doubt if the reſt of the world would allow her to ſhut them out from ſo good a market. If we were once free, I doubt ſhe could effect it. I doubt ſhe could have power, after the ſeparation of Ireland, to act ſo injurious a part; but as Ireland has no foreign dominion, and I truſt never

never will, if her whole foreign trade was carried on by foreign ſhips, it is of little matter. The old notion that a carrying trade is the moſt beneficial, is nonſenſe; the home trade ſhould be the great national object, and that would be moſt flouriſhing. There is no convenience nor a comfort of life that we could not find in our iſland; and the temporary inconvenience and loſs we ſhould feel by being obliged for a long time to ſupply ourſelves, would be compenſated in a great meaſure, by the number of hidden reſources we ſhould diſcover.

ARTHUR O'CONNOR

DR. M'NEVIN's EXAMINATION.

The Examination of WILLIAM JAMES M'NEVIN, *before the Secret Committee of the Houſe of Lords, Auguſt* 7, 1798.

I took the following minute of my examinations before the Secret Committee of the Lords and Commons, being then convinced that they would not publiſh the entire of my anſwers, and that I ſhould poſſibly find it neceſſary, in vindication of truth, to publiſh them myſelf. The garbled, diſingenuous report of theſe Committees has appeared, and I had then an opportunity of complaining to the Lord Chancellor of the unfairneſs with which my examinations are ſet forth in the appendix to it. He did not deny the fact, but declared very roundly, I muſt not expect they would publiſh more of them than would anſwer their purpoſe.—This, to be ſure, was candid, and I will not conceal one of the very few merits I can allow his Lordſhip.

The Lord Chancellor had before him extracts from the Memoire, which we ſent to Lord Caſtlereagh, on the 4th of Auguſt, in fulfillment of our agreement with Government. They related to the facts detailed in our paper concerning the hiſtory

hiſtory and progreſs of the Union, detached from an account of the motives and abuſes which were ſtated by us to have given riſe to the reſolutions we adopted. The examination was altogether conducted in a manner to obtain for ſuch parts of the Memoire, a certain authenticity for publication, without publiſhing the Memoire itſelf. He went into a minute examination of the civil and military organization, and the various communications with France. When he came to that part which mentions another Memoire given to the French Miniſter at Hamburgh, he turned to an extract of a copy of it, which he had before him upon ſome ſubſequent occaſion. He ſaid that no copy of the entire was ever ſent from England, and in this I can readily believe him.—He aſked how that Memoire happened to be given to the French Miniſter; I anſwered that the Iriſh Agent applied to the French Miniſter for a paſſport to go into France, which the Miniſter made ſome difficulty in granting, but called for a Memoire, and offered to tranſmit it to his Government. The Memoire was accordingly written, and ſoon after the perſon got a paſſport. This tedious examination took up ſeveral hours.

Lord Chancellor. Pray, Dr. M'Nevin, what number of troops did the Iriſh Directory require from the French Government for the invaſion of Ireland?

M'Nevin. The *minimum* force was 5,000 men, the *maximum* 10,000; with that number, and a large quantity of arms and ammunition, we knew that an Iriſh army could be formed and diſciplined; this, aided by the univerſal wiſh of the people to ſhake off the yoke, we had no doubt would ſucceed; and we were always ſolicitous that no foreign force ſhould be able to dictate in our country: Liberty and National Independenc being our object, we never meant to engage in a ſtruggle for a change of maſters.

Lord

LORD CHANCELLOR. Was not your object a ſeparation from England?

M'NEVIN. It certainly became our object, when we were convinced that Liberty was not otherwiſe attainable; our reaſons for this determination are given in the Memoire; it is a meaſure we were forced into, in as much as I am now, and always have been of opinion, that if we were an independent Republic, and Britain ceaſed to be formidable to us, our intereſt would require an intimate connection with her.

LORD CHANCELLOR. Such as ſubſiſts between England and America?

M'NEVIN. Something like it, my Lord.

Archbiſhop of CASHEL. In plain Engliſh, that Ireland ſhould ſtand onher own bottom, and trade with every other country, juſt according as ſhe found it would be her intereſt?

M'NEVIN. Preciſely, my Lord; I have not, I own, any idea of ſacrificing the intereſts of Ireland to thoſe of any other country; nor why we ſhould not, in that, as in every other reſpect, be as free as the Engliſh themſelves.

Archbiſhop of CASHEL. Ireland could not ſupport herſelf alone.

M'NEVIN. In my opinion ſhe could; and if once her own miſtreſs, would be invincible againſt England and France together; but this, my Lord, is a combination never to be expected. If neceſſary, I could bring as many proofs in ſupport of this opinion as a thing admits of, which may be only ſupported or oppoſed by probabilities.

Lord

Lord KILWARDEN. Had the North any intention of riſing in rebellion in the ſummer of 1797?

M'NEVIN. It had an intention of riſing in arms after General Lake's proclamation.

Lord KILWARDEN. What prevented it?

M'NEVIN. The people of the North were made acquainted with aſſurances received about this time from France, that the expected ſuccours would be ſhortly ſent to us; and it was repreſented to them, that we would be giving the Engliſh a great advantage by beginning before they arrived. For this, as well as other reaſons, I was always averſe to our beginning by ourſelves.

Lord KILWARDEN. Then if you thought you would have ſucceeded you would have begun?

M'NEVIN. Moſt probably we ſhould; at the ſame time I am bound to declare, that it was our wiſh to act with French aid, becauſe that would tend to make the revolution leſs bloody, by determining many to join in it early, who, while the balance of ſucceſs was doubtful, would either retain an injurious neutrality, or even perhaps oppoſe it.

Lord KILWARDEN. The Union held out to the poor an aſſurance that their condition would be ameliorated; how was this to be accompliſhed?

M'NEVIN. In the firſt place, by an abolition of tythes; and in the next, by eſtabliſhing ſuch an order of things as would give more free ſcope to their induſtry, and ſecure to them a better recompence for it.

Archbiſhop of CASHEL. You know very well if tythes were

were aboliſhed the landlords would raiſe the rents, and the the tenants would not be benefited.

M'Nevin. I know, my Lord, that during the period of the leaſe, at leaſt, there would be no ſuch riſe, but that now, year after year, there is not a ſingle improvement made by the tenant, without the Parſon's getting a proportion of the profits; it is a tax which encreaſes in proportion with the tenants' induſtry, and encroaches on his capital, in order to form an income for a man, to whom he is not indebted for any ſervice, and in general there is the loſs of the full tenth between the Incumbent and his Proctor.

Archbiſhop of Cashel. Can you account for the maſſacres committed upon the Proteſtants by the Papiſts in the county of Wexford?

M'Nevin. My Lord, I am far from being the apologiſt of maſſacres, however provoked; but if I am rightly informed as to the conduct of the Magiſtrates of that county, the maſſacres you allude to were acts of retaliation upon enemies, much more than fanaticiſm: moreover, my Lord, it has been the misfortune of this country, ſcarcely ever to have known the Engliſh natives or ſettlers, otherwiſe than enemies, and in his language the Iriſh peaſant has but one name for Proteſtant and Engliſhman, and confounds them; he calls both by the name of *Saſanagh*; his converſation, therefore is *leſs againſt a religioniſt* than againſt a *foe*; his prejudice is the effect of the ignorance he is kept in, and the treatment he receives. How can we be ſurprized at it, when ſo much pains are taken to brutalize him?

Lord Chancellor. I agree with Dr. M'Nevin; the Iriſh peaſant conſiders the two words as ſynonimous; he calls Proteſtant and Engliſhman, indifferently, *Saſanagh*.

Lord

Lord KIRWARDEN. I ſuppoſe the religious eſtabliſhment would be aboliſhed with the tythes?

M'NEVIN. I ſuppoſe it would.

Lord KILWARDEN, Would you not ſet up another?

M'NEVIN. No, indeed.

Lord KILWARDEN. Not the Roman Catholic?

M'NEVIN. I would no more conſent to that than I would to the eſtabliſhment of *Mahometaniſm*.

Lord KILWARDEN. What would you do then?

M'NEVIN. That which they do in America; let each man profeſs the religion of his conſcience, and pay his own paſtor.

LORD CHANCELLOR. Do you think the maſs of the people in the provinces of Leinſter, Munſter, and Connaught care the value of this pen, or the drop of ink it contains, for Parliamentary Reform or Catholic Emancipation?

M'NEVIN. I am ſure they do not, if by the maſs of the people your Lordſhip means the common illiterate people; they do not underſtand it. What they very well underſtand is, that it would be a very great advantage to them to be relieved from the payment of tythes, and not to be fleeced by their landlords; but there is not a man who can read a newſpaper, who has not conſidered the queſtion of Reform, and was not once at leaſt attached to that meaſure; the people of the leaſt education underſtand it; and why the common

common people, whoſe opinion on every other occaſion is ſo little valued, ſhould be made the criterion of public opinion, I do not know.

Lord Chancellor. I dare ſay they all underſtand it better than I do?

M'Nevin. As to Catholic Emancipation, the importance of that queſtion has paſſed away long ſince; it really is not worth a moment's thought at the preſent period.

Lord Dillon. Has the Union extended much into Connaught?

M'Nevin. It has, very conſiderably.

Lord Dillon. I did not think ſo. What is the extent of the organization?

M'Nevin. Leſs, perhaps, than in other places; it got later into Connaught, but very great numbers have taken the teſt. From the miſery of the poor people, and the oppreſſiveneſs of landlords in many parts of that province, we have no doubt but if the French ever land in force there, they will be joined by thouſands, probably by the whole of its population.

Archbiſhop of Cashel. If the French had made peace at Liſle, as you ſay they were willing to do, they would have left you in the lurch; and may they not do ſo again?

M'Nevin. The French Government declared, that it would not deceive the Iriſh; and that it muſt make peace if England offered ſuch terms as France had a right to expect; but that if the inſincerity of the Cabinet of St. James's ſhould

fruſtrate the negociation, the Iriſh ſhould never be abandoned; and I now conſider the Directory as bound by every tie of honour never to make peace until we are an independent nation.

Archbiſhop of CASHEL. What ſecurity have you that the French would not keep this country as a conqueſt?

M'NEVIN. Their intereſt and our power: if they attempted any ſuch thing, they muſt know that England would not fail to take advantage of it; that ſhe would then begin to get a ſenſe of juſtice towards Ireland, and make us any offer ſhort of ſeparation, as ſhe did America, when by a like aſſiſtance America was enabled to ſhake off her yoke; moreover it is not poſſible for the French to ſend any force into this country, which would not be at the mercy of its inhabitants; but the example which was held out to them, and to which they promiſed to conform, was that of Rochambeau in America.

A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE. To what number do you think the United Iriſhmen amounted all over the kingdom?

M'NEVIN. Thoſe who have taken the teſt do not, I am convinced, fall ſhort of 500,000, without reckoning women and old men. The number regularly organized, is not leſs than 300,000; and I have no doubt all theſe will be ready to fight for the liberties of Ireland, when they get a fair opportunity.

LORD CHANCELLOR. We ſhall not trouble you with any more queſtions.

WILLIAM JAMES M'NEVIN.

DR. M'NEVIN's EXAMINATION.

Examination of Wm. James M'Nevin, before the Secret Committee of the Houſe of Commons, Auguſt the 8th, 1798.

Lord Castlereagh. Dr. M'Nevin, the Lords have ſent us the minutes of your examination before them, and we only wiſh to trouble you with ſome queſtions relative to the interior ſtate of the country.

Speaker. Pray, Sir, what do you think occaſioned the inſurrection?

M'Nevin. The inſurrection was occaſioned by the houſe-burnings, the whipping to extort confeſſions, the torture of various kinds, the free quarters, and the murders committed upon the people by the magiſtrates and the army.

Speaker. This only took place ſince the inſurrection.

M'Nevin. It is more than twelve months (looking at Mr. Corry) ſince theſe horrors were perpetrated by the Antient Britons about Newry; and long before the inſur-

rection

rection they were quite common through the counties of Kildare and Carlow, and began to be practiced with very great activity in the counties of Wicklow and Wexford.

Corry and Latouche. Yes, a few houſes were burned.

M'Nevin. Gentlemen, there were a great deal more than a few houſes burned.

Speaker. Would not the organization have gone on, and the Union become ſtronger, but that the inſurrection was brought forward too ſoon?

M'Nevin. The organization would have proceeded, and the Union have acquired that ſtrength which ariſes from order; organization would at the ſame time have given a controul over the people, capable of reſtraining their exceſſes; and you ſee ſcarcely any have been committed in thoſe counties where it was well eſtabliſhed.

Lord Castlereagh. You acknowledge the Union would have become ſtronger, *but for the means taken to make it explode?*

M'Nevin. It would every day have become more perfect, but I do not ſee any thing in what has happened to deter the people from perſevering in the Union and its objects; on the contrary, if I am rightly informed, the trial of force muſt tend to give the people confidence in their own power, as I underſtand it is now admitted, that if the inſurrection was general, and well conducted, it would have been ſucceſsful.

Sir

Sir J. Parnel. Do you know the population of Wexford county?

M'Nevin. Not exactly; but people agree, that if the inſurrection of a few counties in Leinſter, unſkilfully as it was directed, was ſo near overthrowing the Government, a general riſing would have freed Ireland.

Lord Castlereagh. Were not the different meaſures of the Government, which are complained of, ſubſequent to various proceedings of the United Iriſhmen?

M'Nevin. Prior, my Lord, to moſt of them; if your Lordſhip deſires it, I will prove, by compariſon of dates, that Government throughout has been the aggreſſor.—(*His Lordſhip was not curious.*)

Speaker (looking at the minutes from the Lords). You ſay that you wiſhed to keep back the inſurrection; how do you reconcile that with the general plan of arming?

M'Nevin. From the time we had given up Reform as hopeleſs, and determined to receive the French, we adopted a military organization, and prepared to be in a condition to co-operate with them; but it was always our wiſh to wait, if poſſible, for their arrival. We wiſhed to ſee liberty eſtabliſhed in our country with the leaſt poſſible expence of private happineſs, and in ſuch a way that no honeſt man of either party ſhould have cauſe to regret it. We had before our eyes the revolution of 1688, in which a popular General, with only a ſmall army, gave the friends of liberty an opportunity of declaring themſelves; accordingly, upon that celebrated occaſion, the junction of the people of England with King William was ſo extenſive, that war and its concomitant evils, were entirely precluded. I know the caſe would be the ſame here if there was a French landing.

Mr.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Altho' talents and education are to be found in the Union, yet there is no compariſon in point of property between thoſe who invited the French, and thoſe who brought in King William.

M'NEVIN. Pardon me, Sir, I know very many who poſſeſs probably much larger properties than did Lord Danby, who ſigned the invitation to the Prince of Orange, or than did Lord Somers, who was the great champion of the revolution. The property in the Union is immenſe; but perſons in a ſituation to be more eaſily watched were not required to render themſelves particularly conſpicuous.

SPEAKER. But in caſe of a revolution, would not many perſons be baniſhed or deſtroyed, and their properties forfeited —for inſtance, the Gentlemen here?

M'NEVIN. We never had a doubt but in ſuch an event many of thoſe who profeſs to be the warmeſt friends of the Britiſh connexion, would very quickly join us, and the readineſs with which we have ſeen them ſupport different other Adminiſtrations, led us to ſuppoſe they might poſſibly do us the HONOUR of ſupporting our own. I am confident, Sir, that in caſe of revolution, the United Iriſhmen would behave better to their enemies, than their enemies do to them.

SPEAKER. Was not the *Olive Branch*, and the arms ſhe had on board, deſtined for this country?

M'NEVIN. I never heard they were; arms have been frequently offered, but we always refuſed to accept them without troops; for we knew that an inſurrection would be the immediate conſequence of a landing of arms, and we conſtantly declared to the French Government, that we never

never meant to make our country a La Vendee, or the ſeat of Chouan.

SPEAKER. Do you think Catholic Emancipation or Parliamentary Reform are objects of any importance with the common people?

M'NEVIN. Catholic Emancipation, as it is called, the people do not care about; I am ſure they ought not now; they know, I believe, very generally, that it would be attended with no other effect than to admit into the Houſe of Peers a few individuals who profeſs the Catholic religion, and enable ſome others to ſpeculate on ſeats in the Houſe of Commons. No man is ſo ignorant as to think this would be a national benefit. When Lord Fitzwilliam was here I conſidered the meaſure a good one, as it would have removed the pretexts of thoſe feuds and animoſities which have deſolated Ireland for two centuries, and have been lately ſo unhappily exacerbated; but now that thoſe evils have occurred, which the ſtay of that Nobleman would have prevented, they are not little meaſures which can remedy the grievances of this country.

[SPEAKER, looking over at ſomebody. See that.]

SPEAKER. But are you not ſatisfied that Reform would go as little way to content the people as Catholic Emancipation?

M'NEVIN. Sir, I can beſt anſwer that queſtion by declaring what the ſentiments of the United Iriſhmen were at different periods. When Mr. Ponſonby brought in his firſt bill of Reform, I remember having converſed with ſome of the moſt confidential men in the North on that ſubject, and they declared to me, they would think the country happy, and likely to think itſelf ſo, by getting that bill. When he brought

brought in his laſt bill, I am ſure the country at large would have been ſatisfied with the ſame.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. They would have been ſatisfied to effect a Revolution through a Reform ?

M'NEVIN. If a change of ſyſtem be one way or other inevitable, of which I have no doubt, and which you yourſelves cannot but think highly probable, who can be ſo much intereſted in its occurring peaceably as you are ; in any tranquil change you will retain your properties, and the immenſe influence which attaches to property ; in ſuch a ſituation you would neceſſarily have a conſiderable ſhare in the management of affairs ; and I cannot conceive how a revolution, effected in ſuch a manner, would much confound the order of ſociety, or give any conſiderable ſhock to private happineſs.

SPEAKER. Don't you think the people would be diſſatisfied with any Reformed Parliament which would not aboliſh the Church Eſtabliſhment and Tythes ?

M'NEVIN. I have no idea of a Reformed Parliament that would not act according to the intereſt and known wiſhes of the people. I am clear that Tythes ought to be ſuppreſſed, and have no doubt the Church Eſtabliſhment would follow.

A MEMBER. Would you not ſet up another ?

M'NEVIN. Moſt certainly not ; I conſider all Church Eſtabliſhments as injurious to Liberty and Religion.

Mr. J. C. BERESFORD. Will you tell me what you underſtand by a free Houſe of Commons ?

M'NEVIN.

M'Nevin. One which ſhould be annually and freely returned by the people, and in which their intereſts, for the moſt part, ſhould direct their deciſions.

Mr. J. C. Beresford. What do you think of Pot-walloping Boroughs—they afford a ſpecimen of univerſal ſuffrage?

M'Nevin. I know ſome adverſaries of Reform who have leſs reaſon to be diſpleaſed with them than I have, but they are a proof how uſeleſs would be any partial Reform, and that a thing may be noxious in a detached ſtate, which would form a valuable part of a good ſyſtem.

A Member. It ſeems we are reduced to the unfortunate ſituation of not being able to content the people without a Reform, which would overthrow the Church Eſtabliſhment, and break the connexion with England?

M'Nevin. If you be in that ſituation, give me leave to tell you, it was brought on by the perſeverance with which every ſpecies of Reform has always been refuſed, and the contumely manifeſted towards thoſe who petitioned for it.—Diſcuſſion was provoked by this treatment, and reſentment excited; the conſequences of which are now, that the people would probably exerciſe to its full extent whatever privilege they acquired, though if timely granted, they would ſtop far ſhort of the length to which it might be carried; this is the nature of man; but, Sir, I ſee no neceſſary connexion between the fall of the Eſtabliſhment and a ſeparation from England.

Speaker. Sure, if the head of the Church was removed, the connexion would be broken?

M'Nevin. It might be preſerved through the King, if the Iriſh thought proper to retain it. As the Parliament now exiſts, with two thirds of it (if I may be allowed to ſpeak frankly) the property of individuals in the pay of the Britiſh Cabinet, the connexion is indeed injurious to Ireland, and it is rendered ſo by the Parliament; but if we had a free Parliament, there might be a federal connexion advantageous to both countries.

Sir J. Parnel. Under that federal connexion Ireland would not go to war when England pleaſed?

M'Nevin. I hope not. Were the connexion of this nature, it would probably have preſerved England from the preſent war, and rendered her the ſame kind of ſervice which might be expected from a free Houſe of Commons if ſhe had one.

A Member. What has hitherto prevented the French from invading this country?

M'Nevin. Nothing, I am ſure, but inability; this, however, will not always laſt; and I have not the leaſt doubt but when it paſſes off, they will invade it, unleſs by a change of ſyſtem you content the nation, and arm it againſt them: it will then defend itſelf, as it did before by its Volunteers.

Speaker. What ſyſtem?

M'Nevin. A ſyſtem of coercion, and a ſyſtem of injuſtice, to be replaced by a ſyſtem of freedom.

Sir J. Parnel. Would you not be diſpoſed, as well as other Gentlemen, who may have influence with the people, to exert it, in order to induce them to give up their arms, without the intervention of force?

M'Nevin.

M'Nevin. I cannot anſwer that queſtion, unleſs I am told what equivalent is meant to be given them for ſuch a ſurrender.

Sir J. Parnel. Pardon.

M'Nevin. They never conſidered it a crime to have arms, nor do I; on the contrary, they have been taught, and know it is a right of theirs to poſſeſs them. If any attempt is made to take from them their arms, they will miſtruſt the motives, and think, not without reaſon, that it is intended by ſuch conduct to leave them naked, at the mercy of their enemies.

Sir J. Parnel. Pikes are horrible weapons, and I don't know but a law might be paſſed againſt them.

M'Nevin. I am ſure I have ſeen as ſtrange laws paſſed without any difficulty, but one might equally as well be made againſt Muſkets and Bayonets.

Sir J. Parnel. But Pikes are not in the contemplation of the law which gives the ſubject the right of poſſeſſing arms.

M'Nevin. I believe, Sir John, the law which declares that right to belong to every freeman, was partly obtained by the Pike.

Speaker. It was Magna Charta.

Lord Castlereagh. What is likely to be the effect of the inſurrection that has been juſt put down?

M'Nevin. It will teach the people that caution which ſome of their friends leſs ſucceſsfully endeavoured to incul-

cate ; and I am afraid it will make them retaliate with a dreadful revenge the cruelties they ſuffered, whenever they have an opportunity.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. Will they, do you think, riſe again ?

M'NEVIN. Not, I believe, till the French come ; but then moſt aſſuredly, whenever they can join them.

SPEAKER. Will the people conſider themſelves bound hereafter by the oaths of the Union ?

M'NEVIN. I ſuppoſe they will.

SPEAKER. Would you ?

M'NEVIN. I who am going to become an emigrant from my country am diſpenſed from anſwering that queſtion ; yet I acknowledge, were I to ſtay, I would think myſelf bound by them ; nor can I diſcover any thing in what has paſſed to make it leſs my duty.

SPEAKER. Aye, you conſider a Republican Government more economical ?

M'NEVIN. Corruption is not neceſſary to it.

SPEAKER. How did you mean to pay the loan from Spain ; I ſuppoſe from our forfeited eſtates ?

M'NEVIN. Rather, Sir, from your places and penſions. If I only take the penſion liſt at 100,000l. (it has been conſiderably

conſiderably higher, and I believe it is ſo ſtill) that alone would be ſufficient to pay the intereſt of four times the half million we meant to borrow. I need not tell you that money can be got, when the intereſt can be regularly paid. We conceive alſo there are ſeveral places with large ſalaries, for which the preſent poſſeſſors do no other ſervice than giving votes in Parliament; another conſiderable fund would, we imagine, be found by giving theſe ſums a different application.

SPEAKER. Do you remember Mr. Grattan's motion about Tythes—was not that a ſhort cut towards putting down the Eſtabliſhed Church?

M'NEVIN. If the ſtability of the Eſtabliſhed Church depends on the payment of Tythes, the Church ſtands on a weaker foundation than in civility I would have ſaid of it, but ſure I am, Sir, that if Tythes had been commuted according to Mr. Grattan's plan, a very powerful engine would have been taken out of our hands.

A MEMBER. Is not the Union much indebted to the Roman Catholic Clergy?

M'NEVIN. The principle of burying all religious differences in oblivion was warmly embraced by the Catholic Clergy; ſome of them became more active members of the Union, and I make no doubt but they are in general well affected to the liberties of their country.

SPEAKER. Have not the Prieſts a great influence over the people?

M'Nevin. When they eſpouſe the intereſts of the people, they are readily obeyed by them, from the reliance that is placed on their better ſenſe and education; when they oppoſe theſe intereſts, they are certainly found to have neither authority or influence; of this I can give you two important examples. At the time the Catholic Committee was oppoſed by the *ſixty-eight*, together with Lord Kenmare and his *markſmen*, a Prieſt, between Kilbeggan and Moate, who endeavoured to ſeduce his flock to ſupport the ſlaviſh principles of that party, was well nigh *hanged* by his own pariſhioners, for what they deemed treachery to their intereſts. The other, a Prieſt in the North, who thought fit to preach againſt the Union: the flock immediately left the Chapel, and ſent him word they would for that Sunday go to the Meeting-houſe; and that if he did not deſiſt from ſuch politics in future, they would come near him no more. Of ſuch a nature, Gentlemen, is the influence ef the Catholic Clergy.

Speaker. Are the Biſhops much looked up to?

M'Nevin. They are not, as far as I can learn, ſo well beloved, or ſo much confided in by the people as the inferior Clergy.

Speaker. Can you aſſign any reaſon for that?

M'Nevin. I am inclined to believe it is becauſe they are ſeen ſo much about the Caſtle, and becauſe ſome acts coming from that body, have manifeſted an over extraordinary compliance for the ſuppoſed wiſhes of Government.

Speaker. Did you ſee Dr. Huſſey's letter—what do you think of that?

M'NEVIN. I have ſeen it, and diſapprove of it. As one name and paper is mentioned, I cannot help ſaying, that I have ſeen another letter, with the name of Doctor Moylan, which contained a remarkable falſehood in favour of Adminiſtration; but as this was only a pious fraud perhaps, I could never hear that they complained of it.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. We will detain you no longer.

WILLIAM JAMES M'NEVIN.

MR. EMMETT's EXAMINATION.

The Examination of THOMAS ADDIS EMMETT, *before the Secret Committee of the Houſe of Commons, Auguſt* 14, 1798.

Lord Caſtlereagh mentioned that the minutes of my examination before the Lords had been tranſmitted to them, and that they only wanted to aſk me a few queſtions in explanation of thoſe minutes. The general turn of the examination was therefore the ſame as that before the Upper Houſe; but I could obſerve much more manifeſtly this time than before, a deſign, out of my anſwers, to draw the concluſion, that nothing would content the people but ſuch changes as would be a departure from what they choſe to call the Engliſh Conſtitution, and the Engliſh ſyſtem; and therefore I preſume they meant to infer, that the popular claims muſt be reſiſted at all hazards. The Speaker ſeemed to me to take the lead in conducting the inveſtigation of this point.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. Mr. Emmett, you ſaid in your examination before the Lords, that the French had not made known the place where they intended landing; how then will

you

you explain an addreſs which we have here, ſtating, that the French were ſhortly expected in Bantry Bay ?

EMMETT. My Lord, I know nothing at preſent of that addreſs, but I ſuppoſe on farther enquiry it will be found to be ſome miſtake, as I am poſitive they never mentioned Bantry Bay in any communication ; I knew on the contrary, Galway Bay was looked on as the probable place of their landing.

N. B. I find upon enquiry that addreſs is without a date, and was written after the French had diſappeared from Bantry Bay, and were generally expected to return.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I have here ſome reſolutions *(which he read, and which, among other things, ſpoke of the extent of the confiſcations that would be made in the event of a revolution, and how they ſhould be applied)*, do you know any thing of them ?

EMMETT. I have a recollection of having read them before ; and if that recollection be right, they are reſolutions that have been paſſed by an individual ſociety at Belfaſt, and were ſeized at the arreſts of Barrett, Burnſide, and others.

Mr. ALEXANDER. They are the ſame.

EMMETT. Then I hope the Committee will draw no inference from them, as to the views of the Executive or of the whole body. You know the North well, and that every man there turns his mind more or leſs on ſpeculative politics ; but certainly the opinion of a few of the leaſt informed among them cannot be conſidered as influencing the whole.

Mr.

Mr. J. C. Beresford. Aye, but would you be able to make ſuch people give up their own opinion to follow yours ?

Emmett. I am convinced we ſhould ; becauſe I know we have done it before, on points where their opinions and wiſhes were very ſtrong.

Mr. Alexander. How did you hope to hold the people in order and good conduct when the reins of government were looſened ?

Emmett. By other equally powerful reins. It was for this purpoſe I conſidered the promoting of organization to be a moral duty. Having no doubt that a revolution would and will take place, unleſs prevented by removing the national grievances, I ſaw in the organization the only way of preventing its being ſuch as would give the nation laſting cauſes of grief and ſhame. Whether there be organization or not, the revolution will take place ; but if the people be claſſed and arranged for the purpoſe, the controul which heads of their own appointment will have over them, by means of the different degrees of repreſentation, and organs of communication, will, I hope, prevent them from committing thoſe acts of outrage and cruelty which may be expected from a juſtly irritated, but ignorant and uncontrouled populace.

Mr. Alexander. But do you think there were in the Union ſuch organs of communication as had an influence over the lower orders, and were at the ſame time fit to communicate and do buſineſs with perſons of a better condition ?

Emmett. I am ſure there were multitudes extremely ſhrewd and ſenſible men, whoſe habits of living were with

the lower orders, but who were perfectly well qualified for doing buſineſs with perſons of any condition.

SPEAKER. You ſay the number of United Iriſhmen is five hundred thouſand—do you look upon them all as fighting men?

EMMETT. There are undoubtedly ſome old men and ſome young lads among them; but I am ſure I ſpeak within bounds when I ſay the number of fighting men in the Union cannot be leſs than three hundred thouſand.

SPEAKER. I underſtand, according to you, the views of the United Iriſh went to a Republic and Separation from England; but that they would probably have compounded for a Reform in Parliament. Am I not right, however, to underſtand that *the object next their hearts* was a Separation and a Republic?

EMMETT. Pardon me, *the object next their hearts* was a redreſs of their grievances; two modes of accompliſhing that object preſented themſelves to their view; one was a Reform by peaceable means; the other was a Revolution and Republic. I have no doubt that if they could flatter themſelves that *the object next their hearts* would be accompliſhed peaceably, by a Reform, they would prefer it indefinitely to a Revolution and Republic, which muſt be more bloody in their operation; but I am alſo convinced, when they ſaw they could not accompliſh the object next their hearts, a redreſs of their grievances, by a Reform, they determined in deſpair to procure it by a Revolution, which I am perſuaded is inevitable, unleſs a Reform be granted.

SPEAKER. You ſay that a Revolution is inevitable, unleſs a Reform be granted: what would be the conſequence of ſuch

ſuch a Reform in redreſſing what you call the grievances of the people ?

EMMETT. In the firſt place, I look to the abolition of Tythes. I think ſuch a reformed Legiſlature would alſo produce an amelioration of the ſtate of the poor, and a diminution of the rents of lands, would eſtabliſh a ſyſtem of national education, and would regulate the commercial intercourſe between Great Britain and Ireland, on the footing of perfect equality, and correct the bloody nature of your criminal code.

SPEAKER. You ſpeak of the abolition of Tythes ; do you include in that the deſtruction of the Eſtabliſhment ?

EMMETT. I have myſelf no doubt of the Eſtabliſhment's being injurious, and I look to its deſtruction, but I cannot undertake to ſay how far the whole of that meaſure is contemplated by the body of the people, becauſe I have frequently heard an acreable tax propoſed as a ſubſtitute, which neceſſarily ſuppoſes the preſervation of the Eſtabliſhment.

SPEAKER. Don't you think the Catholics peculiarly object to Tythes ?

EMMETT. They certainly have the beſt reaſon to complain, but I rather think they object as tenants more than as Catholics, and in common with the reſt of the tenantry of the kingdom ; and if any other way of paying even a Proteſtant Eſtabliſhment, which did not bear ſo ſenſibly on their induſtry were to take place, I believe it would go a great way to content them ; though I confeſs it would not content me ; but I muſt add, that I would (and I am ſure ſo would many others who think of Eſtabliſhments like me) conſent to give the preſent Incumbents equivalent penſions.

Lord

Lord CASTLEREAGH. Don't you think the Catholics look to the accompliſhing the deſtruction of the Eſtabliſhment?

EMMETT. From the declaration they made in 1792 or 1793, I am ſure they did not then; I cannot ſay how far their opinions may have altered ſince, but from many among them propoſing a ſubſtitute for Tythes, I am led to believe they are not yet gone ſo far.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. But don't you think they will look to its deſtruction?

EMMETT. I cannot pay ſo bad a compliment to the reaſons which have convinced myſelf, as not to ſuppoſe they will convince others. As the human mind grows *philoſophic*, it will, I think, wiſh for the deſtruction of all religious eſtabliſhents, and therefore, in proportion as the Catholic mind becomes *philoſophic*, it will of courſe entertain the ſame wiſhes —but I conſider that as the reſult of its *philoſophy*, and not of its religion.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. Don't you think the Catholics would wiſh to ſet up a Catholic Eſtabliſhment, in lieu of the Proteſtant one?

EMMETT. Indeed I don't, even at the preſent day; perhaps ſome old Prieſts, who have long groaned under the penal laws, might wiſh for a retribution to themſelves, but I don't think the young Prieſts would wiſh for it, and I am convinced the Laity would not ſubmit to it, and that the objections to it will be every day gaining ſtrength.

SPEAKER. You alſo mention that a Reform would diminiſh the rents of lands; how do you think that would be done?

EMMETT. I am convinced rack rents can only take place in a country otherwiſe eſſentially oppreſſed; if the value of the people was raiſed in the ſtate, their importance would induce the landlords to conſult their intereſts, and therefore to better their condition. Thus I think it would take place, even without any law bearing upon the matter.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Emmett, you have gone circuit for many years; now have you not obſerved that the condition of the people has been gradually bettering?

EMMETT. Admitting that the face of the country has aſſumed a better appearadce; if you attribute it to the operation of any laws you have paſſed, I muſt only declare my opinion, it is *poſt hoc ſed non eſt hac*. As far as the ſituation of the lower orders may have been bettered in Ireland, it reſults from the encreaſed knowledge, commerce, and intercourſe of the different ſtates of Europe with one another, and is enjoyed in this country only in common with the reſt of civilized Europe and America. I believe the lower orders in all thoſe countries have been improved in their condition within theſe twenty years, but I doubt whether the poor of this kingdom have been bettered in a greater proportion than the poor in the deſpotic ſtates of Germany.

SPEAKER. You mention an improved ſyſtem of national education; are there not as many ſchools in Ireland as in England?

EMMETT. I believe there are, and that there is in proportion as great a fund in Ireland as in England, if it were fairly applied; but there is this great difference, the ſchools are Proteſtant ſchools, which anſwer very well in England, but do little good among the Catholic peaſantry of Ireland.—Another thing to be conſidered is, that ſtronger meaſures

are

are immediately neceſſary for educating the Iriſh people than are neceſſary in England: in the latter country no ſteps were taken to counteract the progreſs of knowledge; it had fair play, and was gradually advancing; but in Ireland you have brutalized the vulgar mind, by long continued operation of the Popery laws, which, though they are repealed, have left an effect that will not ceaſe theſe fifty years. It is incumbent then on you to counteract that effect by meaſures which are not equally neceſſary in England.

SPEAKER. You mentioned the criminal code; in what does that differ from the Engliſh?

EMMETT. It ſeems to me, that it would be more adviſeable, in reviewing our criminal law, to compare the crime with the puniſhment, than the Iriſh code with the Engliſh; there is, however, one difference that occurs to me on the inſtant, adminiſtering unlawful oaths is in Ireland puniſhed with death.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. That is a law connected with the ſecurity of the ſtate.

EMMETT. If it is intended to keep up the ferment of the public mind, ſuch laws may be neceſſary; but if it be intended to allay that ferment, they are perfectly uſeleſs.

SPEAKER. Would putting the commercial intercourſe on the footing of equality ſatisfy the people?

EMMETT. I think that equality of ſituations would go nearer ſatisfying the people than any of the other equalities that have been alluded to.

SPEAKER. Then your opinion is that we cannot avoid a Revolution, unleſs we abandon the Engliſh conſtitution, and the

the Engliſh ſyſtem in our eſtabliſhment, education, and criminal laws?

EMMETT. I have already touched on the latter ſubjects; as to the Engliſh conſtitution, I cannot conceive how a Reform in Parliament can be ſaid to deſtroy that.

SPEAKER. Why, in what does the repreſentation differ in Ireland from that in England; are there not in England cloſe boroughs, and is not the right of ſuffrage there confined to 40s. freeholders?

EMMETT. If I were an Engliſhman I ſhould be diſcontented, and therefore cannot ſuppoſe that putting Ireland on a footing with England would content the people of this country; if, however, you have a mind to try a partial experiment, for the ſucceſs of which I would not anſwer, you muſt conſider how many are the cloſe boroughs and large towns which contribute to the appointment of 558, and diminiſh in the ſame proportion the number of the cloſe boroughs and towns which contribute to the appointment of our 300; even that would be a gain to Ireland; but that there ſhould be no miſtake, or confuſion of terms, let us drop the equivocal words *Engliſh conſtitution*, and then I anſwer, I would not be underſtood to ſay, that the Government, of King, Lords, and Commons, would be deſtroyed by a Reform of the Lower Houſe.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. And don't you think that ſuch a Houſe could not co-exiſt with the Government of King and Lords?

EMMETT. If it would not, my Lord, the eulogies that have been paſſed on the Britiſh Conſtitution are very much miſplaced; but I think they could all exiſt together, if the King and Lords meant fairly by the People; if they ſhould

perſiſt

perſiſt in deſigns hoſtile to the people, I do believe they would be overthrown.

[It was then intimated, that they had got into a theoretical diſcuſſion, and that what they wiſhed to enquire into was facts.]

Sir J. Parnel. Mr. Emmett, while you and the Executive were philoſophizing, Lord Edward Fitzgerald was arming and diſciplining the people?

Emmett. Lord Edward was a military man, and if he was doing ſo, he probably thought that was the way in which he could be moſt uſeful to his country; but I am ſure, that if thoſe with whom he acted were convinced that the grievances of the people were redreſſed, and that force was become unneceſſary, he would have been perſuaded to drop all arming and diſciplining.

Mr. J. C. Beresford. I knew Lord Edward well, and always found him very obſtinate.

Emmett. I knew Lord Edward right well, and have done a great deal of buſineſs with him, and have always found, when he had a reliance on the integrity and talents of the perſon he acted with, he was one of the moſt perſuadable men alive, but if he thought a man meant diſhoneſtly or unfairly by him, he was as obſtinate as a mule.

[Many queſtions were then put to me relative to different papers and proceedings of the United Iriſh; among the reſt, John Sheares's proclamation was mentioned with conſiderable ſeverity. I took that opportunity of declaring, that neither the execution of John Sheares, or the obloquy that was endeavoured to be caſt on his memory, ſhould prevent my declaring

claring that I conſidered John Sheares a very honourable and humane man.]

Mr. FRENCH. Mr. Emmett, can you point out any way of inducing the people to give up their arms?

EMMETT. Redreſſing their grievances, and no other.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. Mr. Emmett, we are unwillingly obliged to cloſe this examination by the ſitting of the Houſe.

EMMETT. My Lord, if it be the wiſh of the Committee, I will attend it any other time.

Lord CASTLEREAGH. If we want you, then we ſhall ſend for you.

After the regular examination was cloſed, I was aſked by many of the Members whether there were many perſons of property in the Union. I anſwered that there was immenſe property in it. They acknowledged there was great perſonal property in it, but wiſhed to know was there much landed property; I anſwered there was. They aſked me was it fee ſimple; to that I could give no anſwer. The Attorney General ſaid there was in it many landlords who had large tracts of land, and felt *their* landlords to be great grievances. I admitted that to be the fact. They aſked me had we provided any form of Government. I told them we had a proviſional Government for the inſtant, which we retained in memory; but as to any permanent form of Government, we thought that, and many other matters relating to the changes which would become neceſſary, were not proper objects for our diſcuſſion, but ſhould be referred to a committee choſen by the people.

They did not aſk me what the proviſional Governmen was.

THOMAS ADDIS EMMETT.

THE END.